

DECEMBER 2006

IN THESE TIMES

LAKSHMI CHAUDHRY
ON THE GODLESS
FUNDAMENTALIST

THOMAS GEOGHEGAN
ON WHY WE'RE ALL
WAITERS NOW

Abdul Qasir, 13, picked up what
he thought was a tin. It wasn't.


The Worldwide Legacy of Cluster Bombs

FRIDA BERRIGAN REPORTS

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR MEDIA REFORM

JANUARY 12-14, 2007
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE



Presented by
freepress 

with **BILL MOYERS**
JANE FONDA
JESSE JACKSON
AMY GOODMAN
PHIL DONAHUE
ROBERT McCHESNEY
BEN BAGDIKIAN
JUAN GONZALEZ
VAN JONES
FCC COMMISSIONERS
AND MANY OTHERS

Shoddy journalism. Partisan spin.
Corporate consolidation. Fake news.
Internet freedom under attack.

These are the problems. It's time to fix them.

Join thousands of activists, media makers, educators, journalists, policymakers and people like you at the National Conference for Media Reform. Come to connect, learn, share and join the movement for reform. Register now at:

www.freepress.net/conference

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

contents

VOLUME 30 - NUMBER 12



FEATURES

- 18 OUTING IS IN AGAIN**
Why trawling D.C.'s closets is the trendiest political hobby
BY JOHN IRELAND
- 20 WHAT WE LEAVE BEHIND**
Cluster bomb casualties continue to mount
BY FRIDA BERRIGAN
- 26 IN PRAISE OF IMPEACHMENT**
What happens when 25 months is too long to wait
BY JOHN NICHOLS
- 28 WE ARE ALL WAITERS NOW**
The progressive discussion around taxation needs a refill
BY THOMAS GEOGHEGAN
- 33 THE GODLESS FUNDAMENTALIST**
Richard Dawkins and the search for certainty
BY LAKSHMI CHAUDHRY
- 36 REBIYA KADEER: THE UIGHUR DALAI LAMA**
Ethnic cleansing in China isn't only happening in Tibet
BY JEHANGIR POCHA

COVER: Abdul Qasir, 13, with his left leg amputated and his right arm broken, waits for a dosage of morphine in Kandahar, Afghanistan on December 12, 2001. Eight days earlier he mistakenly picked up a cluster bomb thinking it was a tin. (Photo: Paula Bronstein/Getty Images)

FRONTLINE

- 8 IS CONGRESS GATES' KEEPER?**
The lowdown on Rummy's replacement
BY ROBERT PARRY
- ALSO:**
–Ela Bhatt: Organizing the outsiders
–White-collar workers unite
–Bioneers bridge the color gap
–Turning back the tax revolt
- 12 APPALL-O-METER**
BY DAVE MULCAHEY

VIEWS

- 14 BACK TALK**
Michigan recognizes the plight of the white male
BY SUSAN J. DOUGLAS
- 15 THE THIRD COAST**
The CBC and Nancy Pelosi
BY SALIM MUWAKKIL
- 16 VIEWPOINT**
White progressives just don't get it
BY RINKU SEN
- 17 DROPPIN' A DIME**
Reclaiming the center
BY LAURA S. WASHINGTON

CULTURE

- 38 LIVE AT YOUR OWN RISK**
The ideal of self-sufficiency: Conservatives' gift to the poor
BY DAVID MOBERG
- ALSO:**
–Seeing red about thinking pink
–The skinny on *Thin*
–Cholera and the city
- 45 HEALTH & SCIENCE**
CT Scans: A radioactive risk
BY TERRY J. ALLEN
- 48 DREAD BEATS**
The dub poetry of Linton Kwesi Johnson
BY SILJA J.A. TALVI

Embracing Populism

IT IS A BLISSFUL yet bewildering feeling. You fight so long, endure so much establishment belittlement, and suddenly you win. That's what happened on Nov. 7: We the populists won.

After our fully warranted victory laps and back patting, we must review Nov. 7's lessons. If Democrats want to hold a governing majority, they must see the election for what it was: a mandate for economic populism and a battle cry against Big Money's war on middle-class Americans.

Candidates all over the country talked about how corporate lobbyists have manipulated our trade policy to crush workers, our energy policy to harm consumers and our health care policy to hurt families. Polls show populism (a.k.a., challenging corporate economic power) is the "center" position for the voting public, even though it may not be the "center" position in a K-Street-owned Washington, D.C.

Since the election, Washington's elite have tried to deny progressives credit and to downplay a mandate that threatens their agenda. These revisionists say the election was about Democrats pretending to be Republicans, billing people like Virginia Senator-elect Jim Webb as a "conservative." Yet here is what this "conservative" wrote in a Nov. 15 *Wall Street Journal* op-ed titled "Class Struggle":

The most important—and unfortunately the least debated—issue in politics today is our society's steady drift toward a class-based system, the likes of which we have not seen since the 19th century. America's top tier has grown infinitely richer and more removed over the past 25 years. ... The top 1 percent now takes in an astounding 16 percent of national income, up from 8 percent in 1980. The tax codes protect them, just as they protect corporate America, through a vast system of loopholes.

If that is the new "conservative," progressives won an even bigger victory than we thought.

This is a difficult time for Beltway lobbyists and corporate front-groups like the Democratic Leadership Council. It hurts them to see how populism was the

Democrats' ticket. But the elite are not contrite, rather they babble—"Vital dynamic center! Vital dynamic center!" We can understand their outbursts—it hurts to be rejected—but they are just going to have to deal. As winning candidates from Virginia to Kansas to Montana proved, the strategy of repeating lobbyist-written talking points to win red states belongs in the historical scrap heap. It's the Era of Populism now.

This election, we also saw the potency of the Internet as a weapon. There is the myth circulating that Ned Lamont's loss to Joe Lieberman in Connecticut was a loss for Internet organizing. This is utterly silly. The Lamont campaign, on which I worked as a political strategist, raised millions of dollars online and brought in thousands of volunteers through the Internet. Without the netroots, the Lamont candidacy never would have gotten off the ground in the first place.

Finally, movement progressives need to continue to see the Democratic Party as a means to an end—not an end unto itself. We need more candidates like Lamont—leaders who challenge lobbyists-in-Senator's-clothing like Lieberman and consequently change the national debate on major issues like Iraq.

We must also understand that in fighting these fights, we are going to lose more than we win. That is what happens when you challenge incumbents. But both the wins and the losses are important, because they all help build a movement that transcends any one election cycle.

The major fight in American politics did not end on Nov. 7. All that ended was the beginning of our struggle. Now, the hard work starts—the work that must conclude with more than just a different set of politicians having plum offices in the U.S. Capitol. We must achieve results that affect ordinary Americans' lives and change the course of this country for the long haul.

That is what America voted for—and that is what our country deserves.

—David Sirota

IN THESE TIMES

"With liberty and justice for all..."

FOUNDING EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

James Weinstein (1926-2005)

EDITOR Joel Bleifuss

EXECUTIVE EDITOR Jessica Clark

ASSOCIATE EDITORS Phoebe Connelly, Brian Cook

EDITOR-AT-LARGE Sheryl Larson

SENIOR EDITORS Craig Aaron, Terry J. Allen, Patricia Aufderheide, Lakshmi Chaudhry, Susan J. Douglas, Christopher Hayes, David Moberg, Dave Mulcahey, Salim Muwakkil, David Sirota, Silja J.A. Talvi, Kurt Vonnegut, Laura S. Washington

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Dean Baker, Frida Berrigan, Will Boisvert, Phyllis Eckhaus, Barbara Ehrenreich, Annette Fuentes, Juan Gonzalez, Miles Harvey, Paul Hockenjos, George Hodak, Doug Ireland, Hans Johnson, Naomi Klein, John Nichols, James North, James Parker, Kim Phillips-Fein, Jehangir Pocha, Fred Weir, Adam Werbach, Slavoj Žižek

PROOFREADERS Alan Kimmel, Brian O'Grady, Norman Wishner

INTERNS Nick Burt, Brandon Forbes, Alexander Gourse, Chelsea Ross, Joshua Steward, Wanda Victores

ART DIRECTOR Rachel Jefferson

ILLUSTRATOR Terry LaBan

WEB DIRECTOR Seamus Holman

PUBLISHER Tracy Van Slyke

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER Aaron Sarver

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER Anna Grace Schneider

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR Peter Hoyt

ADVERTISING AND MARKETING COORDINATOR Erin Polgreen

PUBLISHING INTERNS Jesse Evans, Mary McKane, Kelly Ragusa, Kamardip Singh

IN THESE TIMES PUBLISHING CONSORTIUM

Grant Abert, Theresa Alt, Aris Anagnos, Stuart Anderson, Collier Hands, Polly Howells and Eric Werthman, Nancy Kricorian and James Schamus, Lisa Lee, Chris Lloyd, Edith Helen Monsees, Dave Rathke, Abby Rockefeller and Lee Halprin, Perry Rosenstein, Lewis Steel, Ellen Stone-Belic, Dan Terkel, Studs Terkel

BOARD OF DIRECTORS Joel Bleifuss, Janet Geovanis, Robert McChesney, David Moberg, Dave Rathke, Beth Schulman, Tracy Van Slyke

In These Times (ISSN 0160-5992) is published monthly by the Institute for Public Affairs, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, IL and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *In These Times*, 308 E. Hitt St., Mt. Morris, IL 61054. This issue (Vol. 30, No. 12) went to press on November 17, for newsstand sales December 1 to December 29, 2006. The entire contents of *In These Times* are copyright © 2006 by the Institute for Public Affairs, and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without permission of the publisher. Copies of *In These Times'* contract with the National Writers Union are available upon request. Contact the union at (212) 254-0279 or www.nwu.org.

Subscriptions are \$36.95 a year (\$59 for institutions; \$61.95 Canada; \$75.95 overseas). For subscription questions, address changes and back issues call (800) 827-0270.

Complete issues and volumes of *In These Times* are available from Bell and Howell, Ann Arbor, MI. *In These Times* is indexed in the Alternative Press Index and the Left Index. Newsstand circulation through Big Top Newsstand Services, a division of the IPA, at (415) 445-0230, or bigtop@indypress.org.

Printed in the United States.



® GCU 759-C

mixed reaction

QUID PRO QUO

THE QUID:

The defense industry been good to Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.), showering the soon-to-be ex-chairman of the House Armed Services Committee with almost 1.3 million in campaign contributions throughout the years.

THE QUO:

So, after the House-Senate committee hammered out the final details of the recent mammoth defense bill, Hunter had his staffers insert a provision that ended funding for the Office of the Special Instructor General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR). SIGIR, headed by Republican lawyer Stuart Bowen, had been a thorn in the side of companies like Halliburton, Parson and Bechtel, exposing their poor construction work.

Unfortunately for Hunter and his benefactors, Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Russ Feingold (D-Wis.) authored a bill that restored SIGIR's funding, which handily passed on Nov. 14.

“

If we put our trust in the common sense of common men and 'with malice toward none and charity for all' go forward on the great adventure of making political, economic and social democracy a practical reality, we shall not fail.

”

—VICE PRESIDENT HENRY A. WALLACE,
NEW YORK TIMES, APRIL 9, 1944

LABANARAMA BY TERRY LABAN



the lexicon

border security (n.)

Old meaning:

Police measures to regulate America's borders, especially those focused on controlling the flow of legal and illegal immigrants.

New meaning:

Blocking women's access to abortions. According to a panel of Missouri lawmakers, the jobs left vacant by unborn children are luring immigrants to the United States.

"You don't have to think too long," said the panel's chairman Missouri Rep. Ed Emery, "If you kill 44 million of your potential workers, it's not too surprising we would be desperate for workers."

Yeah, we wouldn't think about it too long either.

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



letters



Southern Discomfort

As a refugee who evacuated New Orleans before the flood and now lives in Chicago—and as a New Yorker who had relocated to the southern part of the United States—I find the idea of “winning without the South” infuriating (Thomas Schaller, “Where the Seats Are,” October). A major American city was destroyed recently in the South and that city still lies in ruins. Did the Democrats make this a talking point in the current election? Barely. Were they running on what it means to live in a country where cities can be destroyed and then forgotten? Nope. Now, in the midst of this, a political scientist has the nerve to talk about how the Democrats don’t have to bother winning in the South. It feels like spitting on the graves of those who died because the government wouldn’t even keep up the levees around a city of a half million people.

The South is a part of this country—or didn’t the North realize that’s what it meant to win the civil war?

Keith McGowan
Via e-mail

Voodoo Economics

Years ago, I believed that economics was boring, intellectual rubbish. But I was wrong. It is not boring. Christopher Hayes’ fascinating article, “What We Learn When We Learn Economics” (November) illustrates a few problems of mainstream economics. But it’s even worse than he claims. Like astrology, economics is a pseudo-science. Economics is built upon assumptions known to be false. Elementary logic tells us that conclusions derived from false assumptions cannot be trusted. Michael Yates’ book, *Naming the System*, shows that even empirical data often fail to dissuade economists from adhering to their theories. Indeed, mainstream economics is more like a religion than a science. Perhaps we should abolish tenure in economics departments. Many of the strongest advocates of outsourcing and “free” trade are tenured professors with lifetime job security. If these professors had to face the same market forces they advocate for everyone else, they would soon learn how economics really works. Both economics students and society would benefit.

Robert Baillie
State College, Pa.

EDITORS NOTE

In addition to our October cover stories by Thomas F. Schaller and David Sirota, *In These Times* published extensively on the Web in the days before and after the election. Among the articles that received the greatest response were John Ireland’s “In Loco Parentis: A Gay Page’s Ex-

perience” and David Sirota’s, “Learning From Lamont,” both available at www.inthesetimes.com. Below are three letters—the first regarding Ireland’s story, the others regarding Sirota’s—we received.

I very much appreciate the extremely generous things you had to say about me in your recent article. There is nothing that makes me feel better about the work I do than to hear examples of the good impact I have been able to have from time-to-time on the younger gay people who are struggling with exactly what I struggled with so much of my life.

Thank you.

Rep. Barney Frank
(D-Mass.)
Washington, D.C.

I have been a life-long Democrat—but had never gotten involved in a campaign before. I volunteered at the phone bank, did visibility events, sent out “friends and family” postcards, handed out flyers at a train station and stood outside a polling place on Election Day for four hours with my 10-year-old daughter. I learned how to be an activist for the first time, all from the Ned Lamont campaign. I believed in the promise that anyone can speak up, that votes matter, and that our country belongs to the people—not the Washington insiders’ club. It was obvious that we, Ned and the people of Connecticut, were betrayed by our party.

Establishment Democrats and Republicans conspired, in a way, to keep Joe Lieberman in office because they knew he would continue to

protect their selfish corporate interest at the people’s expense. Connecticut Republicans marched to the polls to vote for Joe because Dick Cheney, Sean Hannity, Fox “News” et al., told them to. That’s the reason Joe won. The only bright spot of the election results: Knowing that Connecticut Republicans went to the polls to vote for Joe instead of a Republican and for their efforts gave away control of the Senate!

L. Jackson
Via e-mail

I recognize how difficult it is to unseat an incumbent of Sen. Joe Lieberman’s stature. An opponent essentially has to run a near-perfect campaign and Ned Lamont did that up until Aug. 8. However, there were two things that contributed to Lamont’s loss on Nov. 7.

The first is that Lamont was too slow to frame the debate after the primary. Lamont should have explained why and how his business experience would have benefited Connecticut in the U.S. Senate.

The second thing isn’t so much something Lamont did wrong, but that Sen. Lieberman did right. Sen. Lieberman constantly alluded to working across party lines, which appealed to many voters. Lamont would have served himself well to say: “Lieberman says he works across party lines, but this has hurt, not helped Connecticut families.” I wish Lamont luck, and I will be reading, and watching, to see what he does next.

James Zipadelli
Via e-mail

WHAT DO YOU READ?

in house

WHAT ARE YOUR PASSIONS?

WHAT MAKES YOU ACT?

**To produce the magazine you need,
we need to hear from YOU.**

WHAT: *In These Times* Reader Feedback Survey

WHERE: *In These Times* Web site: www.inthesetimes.com

WHEN: November 9 to December 6

Give us 10 minutes. It's fast, easy and fun.

Your feedback is vital for *In These Times*' success.

As a special thank you for helping us learn more about you,
100 readers who respond will get a free copy of *Enemy Combatant: My
Imprisonment at Guantanamo, Bagram, and Kandahar* by Moazzam Begg.



this month @
inthesetimes.com

Don't miss our exclusive Web-only stories:

On the heels of her November cover story, "Stunning Revelations," Senior Editor Silja J.A. Talvi takes a look at the future projects of Taser International, Inc., and other companies testing out electricity-based technology for the military.

"Progressive Caucus Rising," by Nick Burt and Joel Bleifuss, examines the post-election ascendance of progressive members of the House, now moving into key committee leadership positions.

YOUR IDEALS CAN LIVE ON.

REMEMBER *IN THESE TIMES* IN YOUR WILL.

For more information call Tracy Van Slyke at 773-772-0100 x243 or e-mail her at: tracy@inthesetimes.com.

how to reach us

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We encourage letters to the editor, and reserve the right to edit them for clarity, grammar and length. Send them to: 2040 North Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, IL 60647. Or submit them electronically at: www.inthesetimes.com/site/about/contact. Please include your full name and address.

SPECIAL REQUESTS

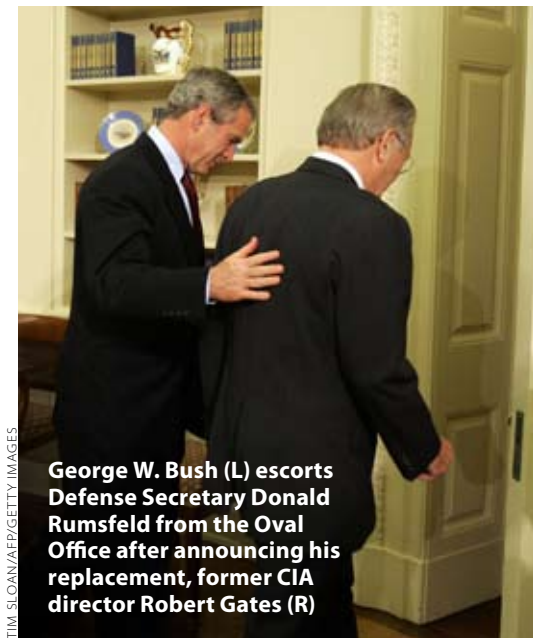
To inquire about lost or damaged issues, back issues and classroom subscriptions, please contact Aaron Sarver at sarver@inthesetimes.com.

SUBSCRIPTION QUESTIONS

To renew your subscription or change your address, please call 1-800-827-0270.

ADVERTISING

To advertise or to request a media kit, please contact Erin Polgreen at erin@inthesetimes.com.



George W. Bush (L) escorts Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld from the Oval Office after announcing his replacement, former CIA director Robert Gates (R)



Is Congress Gates' Keeper?

Bush's choice for defense secretary has faced a senate committee before

BY ROBERT PARRY

ROBERT GATES, GEORGE W. Bush's choice to replace Donald Rumsfeld as Defense Secretary, is a trusted figure within the Bush family's inner circle. But there are lingering questions about whether Gates is a trustworthy public official.

The 63-year-old Gates has long faced accusations of collaborating with Islamic extremists in Iran, arming Saddam Hussein's dictatorship in Iraq, and politicizing U.S. intelligence to conform with the desires of policymakers—three key areas that relate to his future job.

The Bush administration is seeking to slip Gates through the congressional approval process by pressing for a confirmation before the new Democratic-controlled Senate is seated. In 1991, Gates got a similar pass when leading Democrats agreed to put "bipartisanship" ahead of oversight when President George H.W. Bush nominated him for the job of CIA director. At the time, the career intelligence officer brushed aside accusations

that he played secret roles in arming both sides of the Iran-Iraq War. Since then, however, documents have surfaced that raise new questions about Gates' denials.

For instance, the Russian government sent an intelligence report to a House investigative task force in early 1993 stating that Gates participated in secret contacts with Iranian officials in 1980 to delay release of 52 U.S. hostages then held in Iran, a move to benefit the presidential campaign of Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush.

"R[obert] Gates, at that time a staffer of the National Security Council in the administration of Jimmy Carter, and former CIA Director George Bush also took part" in a meeting in Paris in October 1980, according to the Russian report, which meshed with information from witnesses.

Once in office, the Reagan administration did permit weapons to flow to Iran via Israel. The arms flow continued, on and off, until 1986, when the Iran-Contra arms-for-hostages scandal broke.

Gates also was implicated in a secret

operation to funnel military assistance to Iraq in the '80s, as the Reagan administration played off the two countries battling each other in the eight-year-long Iran-Iraq War.

Middle Eastern witnesses alleged that Gates worked on the secret Iraqi initiative, which included Saddam Hussein's procurement of cluster bombs and chemicals used to produce chemical weapons for the war against Iran.

Gates denied those Iran-Iraq accusations in 1991 and the Senate Intelligence Committee—then headed by Gates' personal friend, Sen. David Boren, (D-Okla.)—failed to check out the claims before recommending Gates for confirmation.

However, in early January 1995, Howard Teicher, one of Reagan's National Security Council officials, revealed more details about Gates' alleged role in the Iraq shipments. In a sworn affidavit submitted in a Florida criminal case, Teicher stated that the covert arming of Iraq dated back to the spring of 1982. Iran had gained the upper hand in the war, leading President Reagan to authorize a U.S. tilt toward Saddam Hussein.

The effort to arm the Iraqis was "spearheaded" by CIA Director William Casey and involved his then-deputy, Robert Gates, according to Teicher's affidavit. "The CIA, including both CIA Director Casey and Deputy Director Gates, knew of, approved of, and assisted in the sale of non-U.S. origin military weapons, ammunition and vehicles to Iraq," Teicher wrote.

Ironically, that same pro-Iraq initiative involved Donald Rumsfeld, then Reagan's special emissary to the Middle East. An infamous photograph from 1983 shows a smiling Rumsfeld shaking hands with Saddam Hussein.

Teicher described Gates' role as far more substantive than Rumsfeld's. "Under CIA Director [William] Casey and Deputy Director Gates, the CIA authorized, approved and assisted [Chilean arms dealer Carlos] Cardoen in the manufacture and sale of cluster bombs and other munitions to Iraq," Teicher wrote.

Beyond the secret schemes to aid Iran and Iraq in the '80s, Gates also stands accused of playing a central role in politicizing the CIA intelligence product, tailoring it to fit the interests of his political

superiors, a legacy that some Gates critics say contributed to the botched CIA analysis of Iraqi WMD in 2002.

Before Gates' rapid rise through the CIA's ranks in the '80s, the CIA's tradition was to zealously protect the objectivity and scholarship of the intelligence gathered by the agency. However, during the Reagan administration, that ethos collapsed.

At Gates' confirmation hearings in 1991, former CIA analysts, including renowned Kremlinologist Mel Goodman, took the extraordinary step of coming out of the shadows to accuse Gates of politicizing the intelligence while he was chief of the analytical division and then deputy director.

The former intelligence officers said the ambitious Gates pressured the CIA's analytical division to exaggerate the Soviet menace to fit the ideological perspective of the Reagan administration. Analysts who took a more nuanced view of Soviet power and Moscow's behavior in the world faced pressure and career reprisals.

In 1981, Carolyn McGiffert Ekedahl of the CIA's Soviet office was the unfortunate analyst who was handed the assignment to prepare an analysis of the Soviet Union's

alleged support and direction of international terrorism. Contrary to the desired White House take on Soviet-backed terrorism, Ekedahl said the consensus of the intelligence community was that the Soviets discouraged acts of terrorism by groups getting support from Moscow for practical, not moral, reasons.

"We agreed that the Soviets consistently stated, publicly and privately, that they considered international terrorist activities counterproductive," Ekedahl said. "We had hard evidence to support this conclusion." But Gates took the analysts to task, accusing them of trying to "stick our finger in the policymaker's eye," Ekedahl testified.

Ekedahl said Gates, dissatisfied with the terrorism assessment, joined in rewriting the draft "to suggest greater Soviet support for terrorism and the text was altered by pulling up from the annex reports that overstated Soviet involvement."

In his memoirs, *From the Shadows*, Gates denied politicizing the CIA's intelligence product, though acknowledged that he was aware of Casey's hostile reaction to the analysts' disagreement with right-wing theories about Soviet-directed terrorism.

Soon, the hammer fell on the analysts who had prepared the Soviet-terrorism report. Ekedahl said many analysts were "replaced by people new to the subject who insisted on language emphasizing Soviet control of international terrorist activities."

A donnybrook ensued inside the U.S. intelligence community. Some senior officials responsible for analysis pushed back against Casey's dictates, warning that acts of politicization would undermine the integrity of the process and risk policy disasters in the future.

As the Bush Family grapples with the disaster in Iraq, it is turning to an even more trusted hand to run the Defense Department. The appointment of Robert Gates suggests that the Bush Family is circling the wagons to save the embattled presidency of George W. Bush.

Determining whether Gates can be counted on to do what's in the interest of the larger American public is another question altogether. ■

ROBERT PARRY broke many of the Iran-Contra stories in the '80s for the AP and Newsweek. This story was adapted from a longer article that appeared on ConsortiumNews.com.

GREAT GIFT IDEA! GIVE THE GIFT OF LAUGHTER!

CHEAP LAUGHS AT BUSH'S EXPENSE! SUBSCRIBE TO THE

HUMOR TIMES!



HILARIOUS POLITICAL CARTOONS, AS WELL AS
HUMOR COLUMNS & NON-POLITICAL PANELS!

YES, FOR LESS THAN ONE NIGHT AT THE MOVIES, YOU CAN
GIVE THE GIFT OF LAUGHTER! GO TO

WWW.HUMORTIMES.COM OR SEND A CHECK OR MONEY ORDER

FOR MERELY \$17⁹⁵ (12 ISSUES) TO:

**Humor Times, P.O. Box 162429
Sacramento, CA 95816**

ALSO... SAMPLE ISSUES CAN
BE HAD FOR MERELY \$1⁰⁰ !!!

HANDY TIP:
WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, WHY
LET THEM HAVE ALL THE FUN?
GET A SUBSCRIPTION
FOR YOURSELF!

HUMOR
TIMES —
GOOD FOR
AMERICA!





ROBERT NICKELBERG/TIME LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES

Ela Bhatt, a lawyer, has helped informal workers in India organize.

Organizing the Outsiders

ELA BHATT ORGANIZES the unorganized—the very unorganized.

In 1971, Bhatt was a lawyer and head of the women's wing of the Textile Labour Association, an Indian labor union, when she met a group of "head loaders," women who carried loads of cloth on their heads and were paid by the trip, regardless of the time or weight—and paid erratically, at best. Without a clear employer, they, like more than 90 percent of Indian laborers, were part of the "informal workforce," and had none of the rights granted to workers in the formal labor force.

Bhatt helped them form an organization—financed with their meager dues—that publicized their problems and pressured the merchants to treat them fairly. Word of their success spread, and other informal sector workers joined with them to form the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA). Now SEWA represents 700,000 workers in India, making it one of the largest organizations of workers in the country. Bhatt has since formed an international research center (Women in Informal Economy: Globalising, Organising) and two international networks of home-based workers and street vendors, with organizations in 26 countries.

"SEWA struggles to raise wages," she explained during a visit to the United States to receive the George Meany-Lane Kirkland Human Rights Award from the AFL-CIO. "What we try to do is identify the principal employer. Most workers don't know who their real employer is. Though he has farmed out work to con-

tractors, we try to bring pressure on the principal employer."

As part of its campaigns, SEWA calls strikes only as a last resort. It also organizes cooperatives, which can provide alternative employment if workers are fired for organizing. "It's a joint action of unions and cooperatives," which now employ about 30 percent of members in SEWA's home base of Gujarat state, she said. In addition, there's a cooperative bank and other organizational arms that deal with training, housing, trade, insurance, pensions and other issues.

Members of cooperatives have "higher productivity, higher income, and better tools, and they are owners of their own labor," she said. "They have protected their jobs. They now have a direct link with the market. They have access to social security, to pensions, to insurance, to health care, to child care. And most important, the police and the contractors are not treating them in a humiliating way."

SEWA is also politically active. Bhatt once served as a presidentially appointed member of Parliament, but SEWA refuses to align with any political party, which is making its political work increasingly difficult. "Public life is changing," she says.

"Whatever you do, the party wants to see that they get the benefit. Then the bureaucrats want to control the results." This year, SEWA has been campaigning for incorporating informal sector workers in India's social security system.

SEWA, which now operates with a collective leadership that includes women drawn from its working members, prides itself on being democratic. For every 100 members, there is an elected representative who participates in the council that elects an executive committee, which in turn names the top officers.

Although SEWA is part of several global labor organizations, India's formal sector labor unions don't recognize it as part of the labor movement.

But India must take its vast informal economy seriously, Bhatt argues, despite the attention lavished on its high-tech industries and international call centers. "If it does not invest enough in the informal sector, India will not progress," she says. "India must do this if it wants to be a leader in the world. Otherwise, poverty will always hold you back. When the working population remains poor, you can't bring the nation forward."

—David Moberg

act now



NO CALF LEFT BEHIND

In New York, like much of the nation, standardized test results dictate funding, determine what school a child attends, and even factor into hiring. After parents noticed dramatic drops in their children's scores it came out that many tests are hurriedly written by underpaid, overworked staff.

To bring attention to this problem, a self-described "loose group" of concerned parents in New York City launched BrownietheCow.org. The Web site documents errors in New York's standardized tests and shows parents how to contact the responsible officials. "Before we let test scores drive everything ..." the Web site asks, "shouldn't we make sure the tests make sense and the test-makers are competent?"

—Erin Polgreen

White-Collar Workers Unite

MANY ART STUDENTS would kill for Ilene Schuckett's resume. After graduating from art school, she has been steadily employed by various New York advertising agencies for almost 40 years. Eight years ago, Schuckett took a pharmaceutical ad job, hoping to use her skills in a new capacity. Although everything seemed to be going well, Schuckett noticed a disturbing pattern. "Over the last two or three years, the company began letting people over 40 go with the excuse that they had 'lost business,'" she says.

On May 17, Schuckett faced the same fate. Even though she held one of the most senior and highly paid creative positions in the firm, her boss dismissed her and 25 others for virtually no reason. Now 60, Schuckett is without a job for the first time since college. "I was a freelancer and the [pharmaceutical company] begged me to go on staff," she says. "I worked hard and got raises and promotions until I promoted myself right out the door."

Enter Barbara Ehrenreich. While writing her recent expose, *Bait and Switch: the (Futile) Pursuit of the American Dream*, the veteran journalist and activist learned first-hand the pitfalls of keeping work in corporate America. "I met with career counselors, I read self-help books, I used the Internet and job boards," Ehrenreich says. Realizing that many victims of job instability had nowhere to turn for help, Ehrenreich secured a \$10,000 grant from the Service Employees International Union and collected e-mail addresses from unsatisfied workers on a subsequent book tour. In a matter of months, United Professionals (UP) was born.

UP's mission is simple: "to protect and preserve the American middle class, now under attack from so many directions." Specifically, the group is organizing two related yet disparate types of workers: recent college graduates and middle-aged workforce veterans. "It is important to align the two groups [of workers]," says Tamara Draut, a UP Advisory Board member and the author of *Strapped: Why America's 20- and 30-Somethings Can't Get Ahead*. "Pitting the generations against each other like we often do isn't

an effective way to organize, given that many things would benefit both groups."

It is not surprising that UP would target these sectors of the workforce. Both face overwhelming obstacles in their quest for financial security. According to the Center for American Progress, more than 60 percent of college graduates carry excessive debt, averaging almost \$19,000 per student. For the majority of grads, this debt lingers because many available jobs do not provide adequate salaries or benefits to cover both the rising cost of living and the leftover college expenses. The Center for Economic and Policy Research recently reported that "only 25.2 percent of American workers have jobs that pay at least \$16 per hour and provide health insurance and a pension."

Meanwhile, middle-aged workers face different but equally devastating challenges. In a corporate culture focused on keeping costs low, people in their late 40s and older are often viewed as too old to be valuable. "At some point in the late '80s and early '90s, a whole bunch of corporate executives' attitudes changed toward white-collar workers," says Ehrenreich. "Blue-collar workers were always thought to be disposable, but now they started looking at white-collar workers as just expenses to eliminate." Thus, veterans of the job market are frequently laid off with little warning and must work benefitless contract gigs to stay afloat.

To start, UP will provide a variety of services for workers, including legal resources, job placement assistance and, ultimately, insurance support. Yet its primary goal will be legislative advocacy. Modeled loosely after the AARP, members have expressed interest in lobbying Congress on urgent issues like universal health insurance, unemployment insurance and college loan reform. "People are feeling like their concerns have not been on top of the national agenda for a long time, and they want to change that," says Draut.

Equally important, UP hopes to provide a forum where members can share stories with people in similar predicaments and build awareness of the structural causes behind their personal struggles. Schuckett thinks it is important for the jobless to see that they are not employment anomalies, especially those who internalize the shame attached to "failing" despite following the prescribed formula for American success. "The confluence of similar stories is very impor-

tant," she says. "I've found that I'm not alone, and that's a powerful feeling."

To achieve its goals, UP must expand its membership. Over the past seven weeks, almost 300 people have volunteered to head local chapters. And with dues of a dime a day—\$36.50 a year—the cost isn't an impediment.

"[UP] brings the average middle class American citizen to the debates in Washington and advocates on their behalf," says Draut. "It's a model whose time has come."

—Adam Doster



Human, a band, is filmed by Daryl Hannah for her blog, dhlovelife.com.

Bioneers Bridge the Color Gap

IN NOVEMBER, THE Oxford American Dictionary announced that their Word of the Year was "carbon neutral," which means, "calculating your total climate-damaging carbon emissions, reducing them where possible, and then balancing your remaining emissions." Greens may have fared poorly in the Midterm elections, but they seem well on their way to winning the culture war.

On the forefront of the battle to expand green consciousness are the Bioneers (a contraction of "Biological Pioneers"), a group dedicated to uniting "nature, culture and spirit" (www.bioneers.org). Each year they convene for three days in Marin County, Calif. (You can be one too if you cough up the \$50 annual membership fee).

The 17th Bioneers Conference, held in October, was like a progressive hybrid of

a yoga retreat and Burning Man, replete with the obligatory drum circles, dance parties and meditation workshops. Inside, however, distinguished speakers from various fields spoke with an impressive thoughtfulness, conviction and clarity.

Veteran Bioneer Paul Hawken, a naturalist author and green business entrepreneur, performed an ideological coup when, speaking to the 3,000-plus crowd on the last day of the conference, he recommended that the Bioneers dedicate themselves next year to “racial understanding and reconciliation.”

“It’s very easy for the environmental movement to turn to social justice and say, ‘You should come on our bus and join us,’” Hawken said. “But I think that it’s upside down and backwards. Global Warming is injustice. It’s a type of colonialism. We have to slow down and stop and change the bus. I think the environmental movement has to get on the social justice bus.”

While Hawken’s call came at the end of the weekend, the idea of coalition building was prevalent throughout. One of the most popular speakers was Thomas Linzey, a radical lawyer from Pennsylvania and co-founder of the Commu-

nity Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF), an organization that provides free and affordable legal services to those working toward sustainable communities.

Linzey, in a polo shirt and khakis, didn’t look the part of the typical Bioneer. But he and his partner Richard Grossman have found a way to combat environmental degradation while simultaneously empowering communities. The two founded the Daniel Pennock Democracy Schools, named after a 17 year-old boy who died from exposure to toxic sludge (now euphemistically called biosolids), which provide three-day crash courses on the history and workings of the U.S. government. The aim is to teach students how to “reclaim their rights to democratic self-governance,” particularly in regards to rights now usurped by corporations. Democracy Schools now operate in 26 states and more than 100 Pennsylvania municipalities have adopted anti-corporate ordinances authored by CELDF.

The Bioneers’ movement to combine green living and community empowerment does not stop with government. Organic, locally sourced agriculture has also proved a fertile vehicle for environmental

activism. At one panel, author and “slow food” activist Anna Lappé told the story of a feast she recently attended at Red Hook Farm in Brooklyn. The farm employs young people from the community (until recently the neighborhood did not even have a grocery store) and teaches them agriculture and job skills.

Lappé spoke of a young man who told her that before working on the farm, the only produce that he ate was the lettuce and tomatoes on his burgers, but now his favorite food is borage—an edible, lilac-colored flower. The boy took Lappé to the garden and told her, “This is borage, and it’s the best thing you’ll ever taste.”

Urban farms like Red Hook are popping up around the country, providing low-income communities with access to healthy, sustainable foods. Yet organic options are still mostly relegated to high-end stores like Whole Foods and sustainable lifestyles remain affordable only to the rich. Connecting these struggles remains the next battle for groups like the Bioneers.

As Hawken put it, “There can be no green movement unless there’s a black, brown and copper-colored movement.”

—Chelsea Ross

appall-o-meter

3.5 Once We Were Geniuses

After the wheels fell off the Republican caravan in November, it became possible to hope that the American public had finally grasped the breathtaking iniquity of the party of values. Yet the dark lords of wingerdom appear disinclined to surrender their *droits du seigneur* just yet.

The attitude was nicely summed up by power broker Grover Norquist’s pissy accounting of the GOP’s drubbing. “Bob Sherwood’s seat [in Pennsylvania] would have been overwhelmingly ours, if his mistress hadn’t whined about being throttled,” Norquist complained to the *Financial Times*. Asked if any lessons could be drawn, Norquist quipped, “Yes. The lesson should be, don’t throttle mistresses.”

2.4 Souder’s Folly

Can a political system this absurd survive? Rep. Mark Souder, Republican of Indiana and a winger’s winger, didn’t want to leave anything to chance this fall. So he hired a Minnesota firm to flood his district with phone calls warning constituents of the brown peril of illegal immigration.

Indiana law, however, forbids automated phone calls. So the contractor hired real live phone jockeys working out of a boiler room in—where else?—India.

According to *The Hill*, Souder learned of this outsourcing arrangement after it was captured on his sister’s answering machine. The congressman was reported to be incensed that the only intelligible word in the message was “Hayhurst,” the name of his opponent.

Souder was reelected.

1.3 Bear-on-Bear Action

What is panda bear porn? We don’t know, but whatever it is, Thai officials are hoping it’s hot enough to inspire Chuang Chuang to jump Lin Hui’s bones. The two would-be mates are protagonists in yet another installment of that journalistic evergreen: the pandas who can’t be bothered to shag.

However, Chiang Mai zoo chief Prasertsak Buntragoonpoontawee believes that playing a little hot panda action



on a Jumbotron in Chuang Chuang’s cage may set the bear on fire. “We’ll play the video at the most comfortable and intimate time for him, perhaps after dinner,” Prasertsak told the Australian broadcaster ABC.

Yeah, that’s the stuff. And even if it doesn’t work, there’s always the aftermarket sales opportunities in Japan.

1.9 Boundary Issues

Conservatives serve their country best when their highly symbolic stands add up to utter futility. So, hats off to the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps. According to the Associated Press, this dynamic group of 100 percent Americans has announced plans to build a 10-mile fence of barbed wire and razor-wire along the U.S.-Mexico border on land it owns and they are soliciting donations.

According to the group’s Web site, they’re just “doing the job the federal government will not do.” Keep it up, boys, and good luck with that fundraising.

—Dave Mulcahey

Turning Back the Tax Revolt

I SN'T IT NICE to get some good news? Finally, electoral victories are paving the way for real progressive success. Even better, ballot measure victories have even provided the beginnings of a progressive policy playbook.

At the federal level, narrow victory margins and the continued presence of the Bush administration are likely to stymie progressive reforms. The states, however, are a different story. Democrats now control the "trifecta"—Senate, House, and Governorship—in 15 states. Republicans, in comparison, hold only ten. And in a number of other states, Democratic majorities have Republican governors who campaigned on progressive values.

Even better news comes in the form of the apparent end of the tax revolt: voters rejected a number of so-called "Taxpayers' Bill of Rights" (TABOR) spending cap measures and tax cuts in states across the country. New York City developer-turned-libertarian financier Howard Rich worked with a handful of friends to try and qualify as many as 35 anti-government ballot initiatives. Only one proved successful. Voters also outright rejected a number of tax cuts, including an estate tax repeal that was rejected by more than 60 percent of Washington state voters.

The end of the tax revolt means an opportunity to fund progressive priorities, provided that revenue-enhancing strategies are thought through carefully in advance. So what policies are we likely to see pushed to the front burner in this new, more progressive era? In addition to more minimum wage and paid sick leave proposals, expect to see these issues jump to the front of the line:

- **Energy Independence:** Washington became the most recent state to embrace energy independence by adopting a Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard, which requires utilities to purchase a certain portion of their energy from clean sources. This creates jobs while fighting global warming—a win-win for everyone that is popular with voters.
- **Health Care for All Children:** While some states—most notably Wisconsin and Oregon—are set on a path for health care for all, virtually any state

snapshot



KERFI, CHAD — A Chadian woman and her child take shelter under trees at a spontaneous site for internally displaced Chadians after an attack on their village on Nov. 12 forced them to flee. (Photo by Marco Di Lauro/Getty Images)

can make significant progress by embracing health care for all children. State efforts would coincide with the federal re-upping of State Children's Health Insurance Program.

- **Fix Elections:** After stories reporting voting problems hit the wires in the early morning of Election Day, interest kicked up yet again in Vote by Mail as a sound, paper-trail-included alternative to the current plagued polling place method. Also catching progressives' eyes is election-day voter registration, credited with turning out more young voters in states like Minnesota.
- **Expanded Prescription Drug Access:** Improving Medicare Part D tops the Democratic agenda in D.C., but voters in Oregon proved that states need not wait for Washington when they approved an initiative to expand access to prescription drugs. State governments have significant ability to both increase access to and affordability of prescription drugs.
- **Ethics Reform:** 2006 was a banner year for anti-corruption efforts. New Hampshire Democrats took both

chambers of the legislature, partly on the strength of their governor's ethics push. In Montana, voters overwhelmingly approved a temporary lobbying ban by former government officials. States should also look at ending pay-to-play campaign contributions by government contractors, preventing self-interest from guiding decisions about whether and how to privatize government services.

- **Expanded Early Childhood Education:** With victories for ballot measures to increase funding for early childhood education in both Arizona and Nebraska, expect this movement to gather steam—great news for the next generation that will benefit seriously from the move.

These measures are hardly a full progressive agenda, but combined, they are notable for their diversity and importance, tackling the issues that are on the minds of Americans: getting the economy to treat workers fairly, expanding health care access while reining in costs, and guaranteeing opportunity for the next generation.

—Matt Singer

BY SUSAN J. DOUGLAS

Danger: A Policy With No Brains



HERE AT THE University of Michigan, where the majority of the students and faculty are not right-wing, religious-zealot Republicans pinning for the rapture, there has been elation over the election results and the massive, nationwide rejection of Team Bush's clenched fist around our collective necks.

But it was also a day of great disappointment, as Michigan voters passed the cynically titled "Michigan Civil Rights Initiative," (MCRI) which bans the use of affirmative action by all public institutions in the state. Here we see—in a state that voted Democratic—the ongoing success of conservatives in using race as a wedge issue, and the language of "race neutrality" and "an end to racial preferences" to do so. Racial resentments, disguised as a totally innocent desire simply to have a "level playing field," are alive and well, especially in a state with the worst economy in the country.

The drive to pass the MCRI was led by Jennifer Gratz—a white woman who was put on the UM waitlist in 1995 instead of being immediately accepted and has turned her rejection into an 11-year tantrum—and Ward Connerly, architect of anti-affirmative action Prop. 209 in California. This has long been a winning strategy for the right: have women and people of color serve as the poster children for rolling back civil rights.

The ban passed overwhelmingly—58 to 42 percent—with support from a whopping 70 percent of white men. Women were more divided, but nonetheless a CNN exit poll found that 59 percent of white women favored the ban, and even 30 percent of non-white men supported it. Those with incomes between \$100,000 and \$150,000 voted most overwhelmingly of all income groups to end affirmative action. And of all educational levels, those with college degrees endorsed the ban most strongly. What to make of this?

The ones who came out in force against the ban were, not surprisingly, women of color, who know the double whammy of being discriminated against based on race and gender. Interestingly, people 45 and over—those who lived through the civil rights and women's movements and presumably remember what the workplace and educational institutions were like before—voted most strongly against banning affirmative action, although in the predominantly student precincts around the Ann Arbor campus, the vote was 75 percent against the ban.

The loss is especially poignant here as UM has been one of the nation's leaders and stalwart defenders of affirmative action. The law school, responding to the civil rights movement and recognizing that its student body was almost entirely white, began its own affirmative action program in 1966. Black student activism in the early '70s also spurred increased recruitment of minority students. A 1988 mandate helped increase minority enrollment from 13.5 percent in 1987 to 25.4 percent in 1996. And, of course, the university famously fought for its admissions policies before the Supreme Court in 2003, winning the right to continue to use race as one of the factors in its admissions decisions.

Here are the distortions and misconceptions that have gotten us to this pass. People like Gratz (who had a good high school GPA and mediocre ACT scores) claim that un-

qualified people of color take admissions slots away from qualified white students. Studies, however, show that eliminating affirmative action raises white applicants' chances of admission by only 1.5 to 2 percent, tops. Why? There are so

many white kids competing for slots at colleges, especially selective ones, and relatively few students of color, that using affirmative action just doesn't reduce white students' admissions chances much at all.

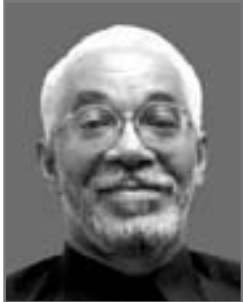
The racializing of affirmative action, combined with the post-feminist notion that white women have achieved complete equality, has also, seemingly, made too many women forget what affirmative action has meant for us. How many of us in jobs previously reserved for men would have them without affirmative action? And, as UM psychologist Patricia Gurin points out, the state of Michigan ranks 49 out of 50 in pay disparities between men and women; MCRI could make this even worse. And just look at California: there's been a 60 percent decline in black enrollments at Berkeley since Prop. 209 passed.

At noon on Nov. 8 on The Diag, the central quad on campus, Mary Sue Coleman, president of the UM, addressed an unusually large crowd of about 2,000 people. She defiantly asserted the importance of diversity to the university, and vowed to search for legal challenges to the law, which may be easier said than done. When I first came here to teach, a black student sat in the first row of my lecture, frequently wearing a T-shirt that read "Danger: Black Man With a Brain." He was one of the best students in the class, full of intellectual chutzpah of the best sort. For many of us here, his T-shirt represents a promise. Clearly, still and sadly, for too many white people it represents a threat. ■

Too many women have forgotten what affirmative action meant for us. How many of us hold jobs previously reserved for men?

BY SALIM MUWAKKIL

The CBC and Speaker Pelosi



THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S resounding victory in the midterm elections is cause for celebration. The ideology-driven policies of the Bush administration (and its congressional sycophants) have entangled the nation in a net of global animosity and widened the domestic gap between rich and poor. If nothing else, the triumph of congressional Democrats will bring greater focus on the Bushites' failures. However, the midterm shakeup

probably won't mean much of a change in the Bush regime's foreign policy, except perhaps a change in tone.

Congressional realignment does offer an opportunity to tackle the domestic problems that have drifted away from the national consciousness. Just one example: widening racial disparities in the criminal justice system are endangering the viability of the African-American family. Yet, this social crisis gets scant political attention.

Mainstream media seems enamored with the narrative of newly elected "Blue Dog" and "New" Democrats pulling the party back to the center. And at this early stage, the victorious Democrats seem eager to stress their centrist intentions.

"Democrats are not about getting even," said speaker-to-be Nancy Pelosi (Calif.) in a post-election summary. "Democrats are about helping America get ahead." Both Pelosi, who will be the first female speaker in history, and expected Senate majority leader Harry Reid (Nev.) have pledged to "govern from the center."

"The Democrats are not going to want to deal with issues that have greater specificity to the African-American community because they are going to be positioning themselves for 2008," says Ron Walters, University of Maryland political scientist and author of several books on black politics. "So they are going to stress issues they believe will best serve the purposes of getting a Democratic president elected."

But many of the Democrats scheduled to take over committee chairmanships are precisely those more progressive members who have been seething in the legislative backwaters. There are some signs that the 110th Congress may be more rambunctious than pundits predict. Many in this new leadership are part of the 43-member Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), whose constituents are on the front line of the GOP's retreat from social justice and racial equity.

The CBC members who are poised for chairmanships are:

Reps. John Conyers (D-Mich.) of the House Judiciary Committee, Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) of the Ways and Means Committee, Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.) of the Homeland Security Committee and Juanita Millender-McDonald (D-Calif.) of the House Administration Committee.

Former CBC chairman Rep. Jim Clyburn (D-S.C.) is tapped to replace Rep. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) as Majority Whip, becoming only the second African-American congress member to assume that post. Rep. Rahm Emanuel (D-Ill.), the chairman of the House Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, reportedly had his eyes on the Whip job, but abandoned it—perhaps at the prospect of a bruising battle with the CBC. Tensions already exist between the congressional Democratic leadership and the CBC.

Some tension stemmed from last May when Pelosi asked

Rep. William Jefferson (D-La.) to resign a seat on the powerful Ways and Means Committee because he was the target of a federal bribery investigation (although he faced no charges). The CBC was angered because no similar demands were made of Rep. Alan Mollohan (D-W.

Va.), who has been slammed for suspicious earmarks connected to his post on the appropriations committee.

As *In These Times* went to press, the incoming speaker was seeking to pre-empt another, perhaps more damaging, struggle over her choice for chair of the House Intelligence Committee. Pelosi, who was once the committee's ranking Democrat, was expected to appoint CBC member Rep. Alcee Hastings (D-Fla.) instead of ranking Rep. Jane Harman (D-Calif.). Pelosi is now being pressured to appoint Harman as a sign of Democratic maturity.

Hastings was a U.S. District Court judge in Florida when he was impeached by a Democratic House in 1988 for taking a bribe, and convicted by the Senate in 1989. He was cleared of the same offense in a criminal trial and won a congressional seat in 1992. An articulate and unrepentant progressive, Hastings is a potent target of conservatives and a popular villain of right wing bloggers.

Harman supported the Iraq war and the Patriot Act, and, according to the Associated Press, is being probed by the Feds for her ties to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). By conflating political propriety with centrist outcomes, the Democratic leadership may be adopting the right-wing's frame.

Progressives must insist that electoral change means just that, a change away from that tired frame and toward a vision of social justice. ■

Many of the Democrats scheduled to take over committee chairmanships are precisely those more progressive members who have been seething in the legislative backwaters.

BY RINKU SEN

White Progressives Don't Get It



EVERY FEW YEARS, a white progressive man begs activists to reject racial questions and focus on the “real” agenda. The latest is Walter Benn Michaels, head of the English Department at the University of Illinois at Chicago, who wrote the book *The Trouble with Diversity: How We Learned to Love Identity and Ignore Inequality*, and who was recently featured in these pages (“Is Diversity Enough?” October).

Rather than saving democracy or liberating the working class, the argument goes, progressives have been forced by narrow-minded people of color to obsess about whether they have one of each kind on their conference panels or college faculties. In this narrative, identity politics is to blame for the inability of progressives to stick together, thereby making room for the rise of conservatism. Michaels says as much, barely acknowledging any other factors, including the right wing’s brilliant (and highly racialized) campaigns to establish its ideas in the American consciousness.

For 20 years, I have worked as an organizer and journalist in racial justice organizations owned and operated by people of color, hoping to contribute to a vibrant larger movement. My current employer, the Applied Research Center, holds that it’s important to be “explicit about race but not exclusive.” That’s not diversity; it’s a sensible analysis for a complicated world.

Analysts like Michaels repeatedly harp on “diversity” as if that’s the only measure of racial progress. That reflects their deep lack of connection with actual communities and their cluelessness about the role that race plays in economics and democracy. They want to write off racism as a distraction from universal solutions, or as a divide-and-conquer tactic to split the working class.

Universal solutions, however, have to deal with discrimination if they’re to be truly universal. Policies designed without racial justice goals can actually deepen the divide, while creating the illusion that they’ve taken care of everyone.

I also often hear that rather than highlighting racial disparities in healthcare, rampant though they are, we should fight for universal healthcare. But if public healthcare were enough to prevent discrimination, then Canada and the United Kingdom wouldn’t have any health disparities. But they do. A study published in July’s *American Journal of Pub-*

lic Health reported that nearly twice as many non-white Canadians needed medicines but could not afford them as their white counterparts, and that 18.6 percent of non-whites had unmet healthcare needs as opposed to 11.1 percent of whites.

Racism leads Americans to make political decisions that undermine their own interests. The current attack on our civil liberties was tested on non-citizens, not after 9/11 but as early as 1996 with hardly a peep out of anybody. That year’s Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act allowed the president to label organizations “terrorist” without any appeal or review, lifted a restriction against the FBI on investigations based on speech or beliefs, and let the Federal government deport or jail immigrants indefinitely for their affiliations or political activity. This is not divide and conquer; it’s about getting white folk used to the practice of

shrinking rights for others—so that they will eventually tolerate it for themselves.

In 2003, when Howard Dean said he wanted to reach out to southern men who had Confederate flags on their pickups, he was forced by both

southerners and blacks to apologize. Dean was on the right track but unable (perhaps from lack of practice?) to articulate what needed to be said—that white southerners had allowed racism to lead them to vote against their own self-interest. White people who absorb racist ideas always think they’ll be exempt from the loss.

If racism dilutes progressive solutions, racial justice can improve life for everyone. Racial justice activists have learned all we could from identity-based movements. First, identity is key—we all start with what is in front of us, as true for white men as for anyone else. But identity doesn’t replace ideas, hence, the difference between “diversity” and justice. Racial justice is about changing the rules of society according to a set of standards: resisting discrimination and violence, not abiding huge disparities, and expanding the role of government to protect economic, social and political rights.

It is white progressives who are stuck on identity politics; progressives of color have long since moved on. The resulting agenda requires far more from the nation, and from our movement, than representation. The failure to incorporate racial justice into a progressive program has deprived progressivism of its true potential—to build a better world for all of us. ■

RINKU SEN is the executive director of the Applied Research Center and the publisher of *ColorLines* magazine.

Policies designed without racial justice goals can actually deepen the divide, while creating the illusion that they’ve taken care of everyone.

BY LAURA S. WASHINGTON

The Second Clinton Ascendancy



ON A POST-ELECTION edition of PBS's "The News Hour with Jim Lehrer," presidential historian Richard Norton Smith told Lehrer: "The Democrats clearly have an opportunity to demonstrate that they're the Bill Clinton party. You know, historically, I think the real winner this week is Bill Clinton."

Smith, a scholar in residence at George Mason University, argued that in recent years "we saw the Democrats veer off" to the wilderness of the left, much to the delight of the Bushies. But the 2006 election sweep, according to Smith, gives the Democrats "an opportunity, particularly with a new crop of moderate and relative conservatives, to reclaim plausibly the middle of the road. And if they succeed at that, I'm telling you, Bill Clinton looks like a prophet with honor."

Got it. When I noted Smith's point to my leftie friends, they all had to agree, though grudgingly.

So let's acknowledge this Second Clinton Ascendancy, and move on.

Next: What does this move to the middle mean for Hill and Bill? In 2008, will it translate into a Hillary victory or a Clinton calamity? I surmise it will be a little bit of both. A nomination, but no coronation.

Speaking of coronations, Clinton faces the little problem of the "skinny guy with the funny name." In 2004, Barack Obama was a lowly state legislator from the South Side of Chicago. In 2008 the freshman U.S. Senator has a good shot at becoming the first black president of the United States. The tea leaves are overwhelming me with their predictions. There is no doubt that he is going to make his presidential bid official in the next few months. No surprises here, but look for his top political guru, David Axelrod, to orchestrate a Wagnerian drama.

One troubling tea leaf for Obama could be the loss of another black rising star. In his run for one of Tennessee's senate seats, U.S. Rep. Harold Ford of Memphis was defeated, by 51 percent to 48 percent, by former Chattanooga Mayor Bob Corker. Ford was vying to become the first black senator from the South since Reconstruction.

Ford's loss might indicate that he fell victim to the sentiments of Southern whites who still can't stomach an African American in high office. That's bad news, the logic goes, for a black candidate who needs some Southern states to win the White House. Indeed, an election exit

poll by the Associated Press found that 40 percent of white voters in Tennessee voted for Ford, compared with 95 percent of the state's black voters.

But another culprit may be afoot here. Ford ran well to the right of his party. He carved out conservative positions on abortion, immigration and Iraq. He even voted for the Defense of Marriage Act. He catered to the holy rollers. Tennessee pundits and activists called Ford a phony. That might have been a key factor in his narrow defeat.

Obama could be headed in the same direction. He is also shifting to the right. Listen beneath the barrage of adoring arias in the national media and you'll detect grumblings from the Democratic left. They are infuriated by some of the centrist stances he's taken. For example, they say, he is ducking support of gay marriage in favor of civil unions.

And earlier this year he voted for the federal Secure Fence Act of 2006, which will create a 700-mile wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Still, I predict that by 2008, the whiners will be vanquished.

Obama is in the right place on

what will be the signature issue of the 2008 presidential contest—the war in Iraq. On that, there is a clear choice between him and the Democratic Party's other leading light. Even before the Iraq debacle began in 2003, Obama was a staunch opponent. Meanwhile, Clinton continues to backpedal on her 2002 vote for the war.

In the meantime, watch out, Washington. Look for the state of Illinois, particularly Chicago, to dominate the seats of power. Obama is just one of a wide and deep pack of clout-heavy characters from the Prairie State.

Take Rep. Rahm Emanuel (D-Ill.), who headed the Democratic Campaign Congressional Committee. The Deaniacs may caterwaul, but I give Emanuel full and unconditional credit for the 2006 Democratic "thumping." This Israeli ballet dancer-turned-White-House-operative is expected to snare the chairmanship of the House Democratic Caucus.

Joining him is Sen. Dick Durbin, who becomes the Number 2 Senate leader. Jan Schakowsky, Jesse Jackson Jr., and Luis Gutierrez are also in line for leadership slots in the U.S. House. The Land of Lincoln is about to become the Home of the Heavies.

They all face a key challenge. They must resist using their newfound clout to exact partisan revenge. Impeachment is a tantalizing prospect for some, but I am salivating at the prospect of the Democrats reclaiming the middle, and letting the Bushies swing, ever so slowly, in the wind. ■

Impeachment is a tantalizing prospect for some, but I am salivating at the prospect of the Democrats reclaiming the middle.

Outing is In Again

Did Bill Maher break the Barney Frank Rule?

BY JOHN IRELAND

OVER THE PAST YEAR, gay sex scandals have rocked right-wing political and religious circles in the United States. Jim West (mayor of Spokane, Wash.), Mark Foley (congressman from Florida), and the Rev. Ted Haggard (president of the National Association of Evangelicals) all learned the sting of a public flogging. The first two men were “outed” when their homosexual orientation was involuntarily exposed publicly by investigative journalists, while Haggard was outed by a gay male escort who claimed to have had sex with him. Historically, the press has been hesitant to give a voice to allegations of hypocrisy if they relate to hidden homosexuality, but the tide is beginning to turn, if only slightly.

On Nov. 8, comedian Bill Maher appeared on CNN’s “Larry King Live” and told the world that Ken Mehlman, head of the Republican National Committee, is gay. Here is what transpired:

Maher: A lot of the chiefs of staff, the people who really run the underpinnings of the Republican Party, are gay. I don’t want to mention names, but I will Friday night.

King: You will Friday night?

Maher: Well, there’s a couple of big people who I think everyone in Washington knows who run the Republican ...

King: You will name them?

Maher: Well, I wouldn’t be the first. I’d get sued if I was the first.

Maher: Ken Mehlman. Okay, there’s one I think people have talked about. I don’t think he’s denied it when he’s been, people have suggested, he doesn’t say ...

King: I never heard that. I’m walking around in a fog. I never ... Ken Mehlman? I never heard that. But the question is ...

Maher: Maybe you don’t go to the same bathhouse I do, Larry.

In a frenzy of self-censorship, the network, a subsidiary of Time-Warner, edited out 12 seconds of tape, removing the mention of Mehlman before the program was re-aired later that night, also redacting the transcript as if to pretend the comments were never uttered.

Nevertheless, on Nov. 10, a GOP spokeswoman announced that Mehlman would resign his post at the end of his term in January. That evening, despite his teaser on CNN, Maher had nothing to say about gay Republicans on his live broadcast of *Real Time with Bill Maher*. It seems that Maher took his own words, “I’d get sued if I was the first,” to heart. Maher did elaborate some on *Nightline* on Nov. 15, explaining:

Larry kept pressing me about this issue, about gays and names. And I thought that well, you know, I’m a political junkie, probably like you are. And so, you know, in my writers’ room, this is anything but news. And by the way, I’m not a million percent sure it’s true. I mean, I never dated the guy. But I don’t feel especially bad about if this happened to a Republican who is very much part and parcel of this administration, which has used gay issues so divisively. It’s hugely hypocritical.

The Frank rule

“The press still feels it’s such a horrible thing to even say it,” says Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.). “It’s in their psyches ... deeply ingrained homophobia.” In 1989, the openly gay legislator turned gay-baiting around on Rep. Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), who had begun a “whisper campaign” about Rep. Thomas Foley (D-



**“Ken Mehlman!
You’ve just been
called out of
the closet!”**

Fla.) being gay. Frank threatened to out five closeted top Republican officials, saying, "If they don't cut the crap, something's going to happen, and I'm going to happen it ... and my list will be accurate." The rumors stopped immediately.

With his very public threat, Frank promulgated what is now widely known as "the Frank Rule," which governs whether outing is justified. "If you're not a hypocrite or misleading people, you have the right to be quiet about [being gay]," said Frank at the time.

Outing has been controversial within the gay community since it gained steam in the late '80s—and gay activists are not united behind "the Frank Rule." For decades, they have fought amongst themselves over whether outing should be used as a weapon, even of defense. One activist, Michaelangelo Signorile, penned a weekly gossip column devoted to outing in the now-defunct magazine *Out-Week*, for which he was roundly, but not universally, condemned. Many activists have recently tapped into their "inner blogger," cross-posting on the virtues and dangers of outing.

Outing for political gain is nothing new. More than 70 years ago, left-wing journalists outed Ernst Röhm, Hitler's closest ally. The Nazi party quickly turned on him, executing him without a trial during the Night of the Long Knives in June 1934. After the Stonewall Riots of 1969, a nascent gay movement spilled out into the American streets, demanding an end to the closet. They met with significant opposition from within and without. The AIDS epidemic outed many, if posthumously, who had carefully cultivated solid cover stories of heterosexuality, most notably Rock Hudson and Roy Cohn.

As more gay Americans, particularly celebrities, came out and claimed their identity as gays and lesbians, the stigma began to lessen and societal attitudes softened. This year, former boy band member Lance Bass came out to a collective yawn. As the Democratic Party became more comfortable with gays in their midst, the opposite happened within the Republican Party as its social conservative base grew.

Out on the Internet

The single greatest change in the politics of outing has occurred with the advent of the "electronic press." The freedom of the press guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution is not intended only

for the benefit of the Fourth Estate. What Gutenberg did in 1447 for those who could afford the printing press, the Internet is doing for everyman—providing a platform for conversation and conversion.

As the line between news producer and consumer blurs, so too does the distinction between journalism and activism. CNN tried to obliterate proof of a modern outing. But within hours, one of

to crack open the door of the Republican closet for quite a while, sending out press releases and landing interviews to pursue other key closeted Republicans. His site lists senators, congressmen, and key Republican Party and White House advisors, complete with investigative reporting into their alleged hypocrisy.

It is widely accepted, and supported by polling, that younger people simply do

'I never dated the guy. But I don't feel especially bad ... this happened to a Republican who is very much part and parcel of this administration, which has used gay issues so divisively.'

their viewers, John Aravosis, posted the redacted transcript on his AmericaBlog.com, as well as links to the "before" and "after" videos, which he posted on YouTube. (Aravosis gained near-celebrity status when he broke the Jeff Gannon, a.k.a. James Guckert, White House press/gay escort story in February 2005.) Now he is in the process of fighting what he calls "a cease-and-desist order" from CNN.

Even before Maher appeared on CNN, blogger Michael Rogers pursued Mehlman and posted video from their face-to-face encounter at a Capitol Hill fundraiser on Oct. 23, where Rogers demanded Mehlman comment on his "conflicting answers on his sexuality." Rogers has been using his Web site, blogActive.com,

not perceive homosexuality as a taboo in the way their parents and grandparents do. The anti-gay agenda currently at the foundation of the Republican Party may well be the last major swing of the pendulum in that direction. The party will likely have to re-imagine its big tent philosophy in light of its losses in the midterm elections. Until then, the public will have to continue to navigate between the extremes of corporate media self-censorship and the "Wild West," no-holds-barred style journalism of the "watch-blogs"—all of us deciding for ourselves what news is fit to print. ■

JOHN IRELAND a Los Angeles-based writer, contributes frequently to *In These Times*.

Atheists, Humanists, Freethinkers, Agnostics

Secular Coalition for America www.secular.org

Support our efforts to protect and strengthen the secular character of our government and to increase the respectability of our community's viewpoints.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Secular Coalition for America P.O. Box 53330, Washington, DC 20009-9330

To make a credit card gift go to www.secular.org/support.html

As a 501(c)(4) organization gifts are not tax-deductible



Hamza Ali, 6, is having his bandage changed by his father at a Baghdad hospital on April 27, 2003. The day before, Hamza was playing outside when an American cluster bomb exploded, wounding his sister Hama, shown on page 25, and killing two of their siblings.



Said Ul Rahman, 8, is carried by his brother at the Mirwais hospital in Kandahar, Afghanistan on December 24, 2001. Ten days earlier Said was injured by an American cluster bomb.



Abbas Yussef Abbas, 6, is kissed by his grandmother in a hospital in the southern Lebanese city of Nabatiyeh, on August 30, 2006. Abbas was wounded when a left-over Israeli cluster bomb exploded in his village of Blida.

WHAT WE LEAVE BEHIND

From Kosovo to Lebanon, cluster bomb casualties continue to mount

BY FRIDA BERRIGAN

IN JUST ONE WEEK in October, a series of bomb scares swept across Germany. Outside of Hannover, 22,000 people were evacuated when three bombs were discovered. A few days later in the same city, a weapons removal squad defused a 500-pound bomb found near the highway. Finally, a highway worker was killed when his cutting machine hit a buried bomb on the main highway into Frankfurt.

The bombs hadn't been planted by terrorists, and they weren't the opening salvos of the next war. The culprit was unexploded ordnance left over from a war fought more than 60 years ago. "We'll have enough work to keep us busy for the next 100 to 120 years," the owner of a bomb-defusing company told the *New York Times*.

The submunitions dispersed by cluster bombs are a lot smaller than 500 pounds, but their use in every major conflict since World War II ensures that bomb clearers the world over will have work for decades—even centuries—to come. From Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, to the countries of the former Yugoslavia, and onto Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon, modern battlefields are littered with bombs that continue to kill long after wars have ended. Ninety-eight percent of those killed or injured by cluster bombs are civilians. And yet international efforts to restrict the use of cluster bombs—modeled after landmine treaties of previous years—are being undermined by lack of U.S. participation. Worse, instead of destroying old cluster bomb stockpiles, the United States is exporting them to allies around the world.

What is a cluster bomb?

Although varied in size and configuration, a cluster munition is essentially a large canister—as long as 13 feet and weighing up to 2,000 pounds—packed with bomblets or submunitions. Launched from the air by fighter planes, bombers or helicopters, or shot out of artillery, rockets or missile systems, the canister is designed to break open mid-air, spreading the submunitions over areas as large as two or three football fields. While some modern systems are outfitted with GPS or infrared guidance systems, or "wind correction" kits to stabilize their spin, most are free-falling or gravity devices. The bomblets—a single canister can hold hundreds—ranging in size from a soda can to a flashlight battery, are packed with shrapnel and an explosive charge. They are meant to explode on impact with the ground, differentiating them from landmines, which are triggered by the victim.

Militaries throughout the world value cluster bombs because a single volley can impede or slow advancing troops and destroy or render unusable airfields and surface-to-air missile sites. But the weapons do not always work as designed. Mine removal teams, post-conflict workers, military officials and even the companies themselves admit that wind, weather and soil conditions, as well as possible mechanical malfunction or human error, can all drive the "dud rate" for these weapons as high as 40 percent.

Cluster bombs are not singled out for prohibition under international law, despite the fact that they cannot distinguish between civilian and combatant and their effects stretch beyond the duration of hostilities—two crucial litmus tests for munitions under the Geneva Conventions that govern conduct during conflicts.

Israel's war against Lebanon: cluster bombs on display

Lebanon provides an object lesson in how these tenets of the Geneva Conventions are not upheld and how implementation of existing law is inadequate to the challenge. On August 14, 2006, Israel and Lebanon signed a peace agreement ending their 34-day war, yet the body count continues to rise. According to a November Handicap International report, since mid-August, unexploded ordnance has killed 21 and wounded another 121 Lebanese civilians.

An Israeli Defense Forces spokesman insists that "all of the weapons and munitions used by the IDF are legal according to international law and their use conforms to international standards." That is cold comfort for the family of 11-year-old Ramy Shibleh, one of the post-war victims. He was gathering pinecones outside Halta, a small southern town where the Lebanese army had already cleared mines twice. But more bombs remained, including the one that Ramy and his brother hit with their cart of pinecones. *Reuters* reports that Ramy tried to toss the rock-like object out of the way, but it exploded, tearing off his right arm and the back of his head and killing him instantly. His mother keeps the shreds of the yellow shirt Ramy was wearing when he died. "He was only picking the pine nuts to buy the toys he loved," she told reporters.

With its weapon industry and the billions in military aid that it provides to Israel each year, the United States is implicated in the war and its grim aftermath without firing one shot or dropping one bomb. At least two of Israel's cluster bomb and launch systems are U.S.-manufactured. Human Rights Watch discov-

ered remnants of the “M483A1” 155mm-artillery projectiles, which each contain 88 M42 AND M46 submunitions. The projectiles are known as “Dual-Purpose Improved Conventional Munitions” (dual in the sense that they are anti-personnel and anti-vehicle) and were developed at “the Army’s Center of Lethality”—the Armament Research, Development and

sualties from these Hezbollah weapons.

The State Department is investigating Israel’s use of American-made cluster bombs during the war in Lebanon—in particular, whether Israel broke a secret agreement made with the United States in 1967 not to use cluster bombs against civilians. In their October 2006 report “Foreseeable Harm,” Landmine Action

ports in the media on the status of the State Department’s investigation, or its conclusions. Calls to the Office of Defense Compliance by *In These Times* requesting more information were not returned. But it does not take months of careful study to conclude that the IDF flagrantly violated U.S. law as well as the secret agreement made to skirt that law, to say nothing of

With the spotlight on Israel’s use of cluster bombs in Lebanon and the failure of international law to stop the carnage there, the call for a ban on cluster bombs similar to the prohibition on landmines is growing louder.

Engineering Center in Picatinny, New Jersey. The researchers also found M26 rockets fired from Lockheed Martin’s Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS). Each MLRS can fire up to 12 rockets at once, and each rocket contains 644 M77 submunitions.

While the Israel Defense Force (IDF) is responsible for the vast majority of the millions of cluster bombs used throughout the war, recent reports from Human Rights Watch assert that Hezbollah shot a hundred or more Chinese-made rockets packed with cluster submunitions. During the war, three civilians in northern Israel were wounded, but as of this writing, there have been no reports of post-conflict ca-

disclosed the conditions of the agreement, including the stipulation that Israel was to use cluster munitions “only for defensive purposes, against fortified military targets, and only if attacked by two or more ‘Arab states.’” Additionally, the secret provisions prohibit use of the bombs except against “regular forces of a sovereign nation” and in “special wartime conditions,” according to the administration and congressional officials. The arrangement gave the IDF greater latitude than the typical regulations that require foreign governments to use U.S.-origin military items solely for internal security and legitimate self-defense.

There have not been any follow-up re-

ports in the media on the status of the State Department’s investigation, or its conclusions.

And then there is the timing. During the last three days of the war—as the final touches on the peace agreement were being made—Israel dumped an estimated 1.2 million bomblets throughout Lebanon, a country smaller than Connecticut. Jan Egeland, the U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, was decidedly undiplomatic in his assessment: “What is shocking and, I would say, to me, completely immoral is that 90 percent of the cluster bomb strikes occurred in the last 72 hours of the conflict, when we knew there would be a resolution.”

With their failure rate of up to 40 percent, more than one of every three bombs may not detonate immediately—lying in wait for children, trucks and livestock.

While the IDF has not explained their decision to saturate southern Lebanon with bombs, an October 6 *New York Times* article posits that Israel wanted to inflict as much last minute harm on Hezbollah as possible, or slow the repopulation of border communities. An unnamed Israeli commander of a rocket unit in Lebanon told *Haaretz* on September 12 that the saturation bombing with cluster weapons was “insane and monstrous; we covered entire towns in cluster bombs.”

The saturation bombing has effectively crippled agriculture. Farmers’ fields and orchards are now minefields and their crops are rotting on the stalk. The summer tobacco, wheat, and fruit, as well as late-yielding crops like olives, cannot be harvested and winter crops, like lentils and chickpeas, have not been planted because farmers cannot plow their fields.



Treat others with justice and respect. How you treat others will be how they treat you.

BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

Ask for our *Making A Difference* brochure today, and find out more about our mutual funds.

Call 1-800-530-5321 or visit www.domini.com.

Domini
SOCIAL INVESTMENTS®
Investing For Good™

You should consider the Domini Funds’ investment objectives, risks, charges, and expenses carefully before investing. Obtain a copy of the Funds’ current prospectus for complete information on these and other topics, by calling 1-800-530-5321 or online at www.domini.com. Please read it carefully before investing or sending money. DSIL Investments Services LLC, Distributor. 10/04

Many of the two to three daily casualties are poor farmers desperate to feed their families from fields that are now de facto minefields.

Rida Nouredine, an olive and wheat farmer whose land is littered with cluster bombs, feels the frustration of many southern Lebanese who are dependent on the land. He told the *New York Times*, "I feel as though someone has tied my arms, or is holding me by my neck, suffocating me because this land is my soul."

Cluster bombs in the eyes of the world

With the spotlight on Israel's use of cluster bombs in Lebanon and the failure of international law to stop the carnage there, the call for a ban on cluster bombs similar to the prohibition on landmines is growing louder. Belgium instituted a ban and Germany announced their troops will no longer use cluster weaponry. Australia and Norway have declared a moratorium. Sweden, Mexico, the Vatican and the International Committee of the Red Cross are all calling for a ban.

The model for their efforts is the Landmine Ban or "Ottawa Treaty," which entered into force in March 1999. The treaty prohibits the manufacture, trade and use of anti-personnel mines, obliges signing countries to destroy stockpiles within four years and clear their own territory within 10 years, and urges governments to help poorer countries clear land and assist landmine victims. Non-governmental organizations like Landmine Action and the Mennonite Central Committee argue that once a cluster submunition hits the ground, it is essentially a landmine and should be barred under the treaty.

The United States is not among the 151 states that have ratified the Landmine Ban, and the Bush Administration's February 2004 landmine policy reserves the right to use so-called "self-destructing mines" through 2010. Israel, Burma, North Korea and 36 other countries also remain outside the international consensus banning landmines.

Another possible tool for anti-cluster bomb campaigners is the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). As ratified, the Convention prohibits or restricts the use of weapons that cause excessive injuries or have indiscriminate effects on people—including weapons that leave undetectable fragments in the human body, mines and booby-traps,

Ali Wansa, 44, sits legless at the Hezbollah run Al-Abbas laboratory in southern Beirut. While working his land in the southern Lebanon village of Dibeen, he came across an Israeli cluster bomb.



MARWAN NAAMANI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

incendiary weapons (such as white phosphorus used by the United States in Iraq and Israel in Lebanon) and blinding laser weapons.

In November 2003, a fifth protocol, addressing "Explosive Remnants of War" like cluster weapon duds, was added. So far, only 26 nations have signed on to Protocol V and agreed to negotiate responsibility for clearance, provide risk education to the local population, improve the reliability of munitions through "voluntary best practices," and continue to implement existing international humanitarian law. These are useful measures, but they do not address the use of cluster bombs, just what to do after they have landed. In addition, ratification by many more countries—especially by countries like Israel and the United States that are using these weapons—is needed for the effort to be more than symbolic.

The CCW's Third Review Conference ran from November 7-17 in Geneva. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other key NGOs and nations see an immediate freeze on the use of inaccurate and unreliable cluster munitions as a worthy outcome of the meeting along with elimination of stockpiles of legacy systems, and a complete ban on the use of cluster munitions against military targets in populated areas. ICRC will hold an "international expert meeting" in 2007 as a first step toward a new global pact on

cluster weapons. Against the backdrop of Lebanon's suffering, there is broad support for these steps. But maintaining the sense of urgency will not be easy, especially in the face of diplomatic foot-dragging by key states like the United States, which says Protocol V is an adequate response to cluster weapons (even though the United States has not yet ratified the measure). In advance of the meeting, the State Department asserted support for Protocol V, but cautioned that it is not interested in "negotiating new rules on cluster munitions or other explosive remnants of war."

Concerted and genuine support from the United States (as a world leader and one of the largest manufacturers of cluster bombs) for banning cluster bombs won't bring Ramy back to his grieving family, and it won't restore Rida's orchards and livelihood, but it could ensure that future generations do not share their suffering.

U.S. cluster weapons: vital, versatile and vicious

While the United States has not ratified the landmine treaty or the CCW, and does not indicate any willingness to accept even partial responsibility for this summer's brutal war, the Pentagon is concerned about cluster weapons. In an October 2004 report to Congress, the Department of Defense described cluster munitions as "vital" and "versatile," but military officials admit they are "keenly aware of and inter-

Masud, 9, lies brain damaged in the intensive care ward at the Emergency Life Support For Civilian War Victims hospital in Kabul on December 26, 2001. Masud and his best friend were playing in Lakar, Afghanistan, when an American cluster bomb he and his best friend had picked up exploded.



PAULA BRONSTEIN/GETTY IMAGES

ested in reducing our cluster munitions dud rates and improving the accuracy of the delivery methods.” Consequently, the Pentagon recently adopted the “Cohen Policy,” named after former Defense Secretary William Cohen, which requires the military to only purchase new cluster weapons that have a 1 percent or smaller dud rate.

Human Rights Watch estimates that the U.S. has a stockpile of 1 billion “old, unreliable and inaccurate” cluster munitions. Some of the so-called “legacy” weapons have been dismantled, but the Defense Department continues to transfer cluster weapons and delivery systems to allies around the world. The Defense Department analyzed various submunitions and found failure rates of 3 to 23 percent under test conditions, but military officials and others acknowledge that these rates can be exacerbated by environmental factors.

The Army, Marines and other military services are requesting hundreds of millions of dollars for new cluster weapons and the retrofitting of existing systems to conform to the Cohen policy. Weapons manufacturers have adapted to the new policy, and their promotional material emphasizes the “limited footprint” and “targetable” nature of their weapons. In vivid military jargon, weapons manufacturer Textron describes the CLAW (Clean Lightweight Area Weapon) as “the next generation smart soft target munition.” (For those

not familiar with the lingo, a soft target is a person.) The Rhode Island-based company boasts that a “single 64-pound munition has the footprint and effectiveness of a 1,000 lb. legacy cluster bomb.”

The Cohen policy and the new weapons it has spawned ensures that despite whatever progress is made in Geneva and at other international fora to ban cluster bombs, the eight U.S. companies that produce cluster weapons, including recognizable names like Textron, General Dynamics, L-3 Communications, Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman, will continue to manufacture the systems and the military will keep using them.

The United States may well be the largest producer, but it is not alone. Human Rights Watch asserts that 33 other countries produce more than 210 different types of cluster munitions. And at least 12 other countries have transferred cluster munitions to as many as 58 nations.

U.S. bombs at work

In its 2004 report, the Pentagon acknowledged “the potential danger to non-combatants posed by UXO [unexploded ordnance]” and declared that it had “developed strict rules of engagement and targeting methodologies, intended to minimize risks to civilians in or near the zone of conflict.” But, in a world far removed from law, policy and dud rate calculations, cluster weapons continue to do what they are designed for.

A quick look at some of the war zones of the last 20 years should be enough to make anti-cluster bomb campaigners out of just about anyone.

According to Handicap International, in 1999, the United States and allies dropped more than 2,000 cluster bombs on the territory of former Yugoslavia, where the stated aim was humanitarian intervention. Human Rights Watch documented that cluster strikes killed 90 to 150 civilians and injured many more, constituting up to 23 percent of the total civilian deaths in the conflict, even though cluster bombs amounted to just 6 percent of bombs dropped.

A few years later in Afghanistan, the goal was different, but the results were similar. From October 2001 to March 2002, in a bid to topple the Taliban, the United States dropped about 1,228 cluster bombs, representing about 5 percent of the U.S. bombs dropped during that time period. According to Handicap International, there were 121 casualties due to cluster bombs during the same period, but it is impossible to link them all to the United States, as both the Soviet Union and the Taliban had used cluster munitions in previous wars. In an October 2001 incident, a U.S. cluster bomb apparently intended for a nearby military base fell on the small community of Qala Shater, causing 11 to 13 deaths. Casualties included a 17-year-old boy named Najibullah who died in front of his home and 70-year-old Faqir Mohammed.

Cluster bombing is different from strafing a village, massacring a family or executing a suspected militant. Hands and consciences remain clean while bodies are shredded and pulped. It leads to a world where any activity can be deadly.

Iraq: a steel rain's gonna fall

Over the last 15 years, Iraq has borne the brunt of U.S. cluster bomb use. During the First Gulf War, Handicap International estimates that the United States dropped 47,167 air-delivered cluster munitions containing more than 13 million submunitions. In one day alone—February 21, 1991—U.S. military personnel fired a total of 220,248 M77 submunitions from the Multiple Launch Rocket System made by Lockheed Martin. During the war, the company's signature system was dubbed "steel rain." The 1991 "air war" lasted just 43 days, but in the years that followed more than 4,000 civilians have been killed or injured by cluster munition duds. Iraqi civilians were not the only casualties—at least 80 U.S. soldiers have been injured by cluster munitions.

In 2003, one of the earliest reported uses of cluster weapons during Operation Enduring Freedom was also one of the most gruesome. U.S. cluster weapons fired on the al-Hilla community killed 33 and injured another 109. According to Amnesty International, "Injured survi-

vors told reporters how the explosives fell 'like grapes' from the sky, and how bomblets bounced through the windows and doors of their homes before exploding."

In the period between "shock and awe" and "mission accomplished," the U.S. and U.K. forces dropped between 1,300 and 1,500 cluster munitions from the air, and another 11,600 from land-based systems. The death toll from these assaults has been difficult to calculate. Handicap International places at least a portion of the blame for that difficulty on the Coalition Provisional Authority, saying that "[d]uring the 2003 conflict and its aftermath, the CPA strongly discouraged casualty data collection, especially in relation to cluster submunitions." The report goes on to note that, as of September, there is still no data collection mechanism for tracking new casualties in Iraq.


Ban it all

Indiscriminate weaponry like cluster bombs hides who is responsible and removes culpability. Without responsibility, how can there be law? The big

bomb releases the little bombs, which might kill a soldier tomorrow, a farmer next month, or a child a year from now. Cluster bombing is different from strafing a village, massacring a family or executing a suspected militant. Hands and consciences remain clean while bodies are shredded and pulped. There is no My Lai massacre or No Gun Ri atrocity with cluster weapons. Rather, a permanent state of terror is created where all human activity is dangerous and costly.

Recent experience in Lebanon, Iraq and elsewhere demonstrates the grave and lasting consequences of cluster bombs, and reveals the shortcomings of existing international law and its enforcement. Weapons that indiscriminately kills long after hostilities have abated is an anathema to international law—and human decency. It is time to ban them all. ■

FRIDA BERRIGAN is a senior research associate with the Arms Trade Resource Center, a project of the World Policy Institute.



Hama Ali, 13, recovers in her house from a shrapnel wound to her stomach on April 27, 2003. The day before, she and her brother Hamza, shown on page 20, were playing outside when an American cluster bomb exploded, killing two of their siblings.

In Praise of Impeachment

Pelosi may have put it “off the table,” but it’s not her decision anyway

BY JOHN NICHOLS

A LOT OF PROGRESSIVES WERE perturbed when, immediately after the American people handed the House Democratic Caucus the power to check and balance the Bush presidency, Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) repeated her enthusiasm-dampening pledge that “impeachment is off the table.”

But there is nothing new about a Democratic Speaker of the House shying away from the “I” word, even when the leader knows that a Republican president merits official sanction. The same thing happened after Richard Nixon vanquished George McGovern in the 1972 election.

Grassroots Democrats and a few bold members of Congress began suggesting that issues raised by the Watergate burglary and related matters were serious enough to merit discussion of impeachment. House Speaker Carl Albert, House Majority Leader Tip O’Neill and most of their compatriots in the Democratic Party knew at the time that, despite the president’s protestations, Nixon was indeed a crook—and by extension, that he and his nefarious inner circle had committed acts that gave definition to the deliberately amorphous term “high crimes and misdemeanors.” Yet, they too took impeachment off the table—and kept it off—until the evolution of the scandal and the popular outcry it inspired forced them to put the most powerful tool in the arsenal of the republic back where it belonged.

Surely, Pelosi’s reticence is frustrating to patriotic Americans who know that we have reached the moment when, to borrow a thought from a Constitutional scholar named James Madison: “it may ... be found necessary to impeach the President himself.” But history tells us that Pelosi’s pronouncement ought not be taken seriously, as she is, at best, a bit player in what could yet be an epic drama. Pelosi is a politician of the most cautious school. As such, her post-election assertion ought to be taken about as seriously as George Bush’s pre-election declara-



The question is not: Where does Pelosi stand at the opening of this session of Congress? Rather, it is: Where do the people stand?

TIM SLOAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

tion that he wanted Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to remain at the Pentagon until the end of the administration’s second term.

Why should we dismiss the Speaker-to-be’s adamant dismissal of impeachment as mere wordplay? Not because Pelosi is secretly plotting impeachment. Rather, because any meaningful movement to impeach a president—and, in the case of the Bush-Cheney administration, a vice president—does not come from the Speaker of the House. The Speaker is, in fact, often the last to know that the Constitutional moment has arrived.

Impeachment is an organic process, imagined as such by the founders. Its seed is not naturally planted in Washington, nor nurtured there. When an impeachment initiative is little more than a manifestation of inside-the-Beltway partisanship, as was the case with the Clinton impeachment of the late ’90s, its proponents invite an appropriate rebuke from the citizenry. But when proposals for impeachment are grounded in popular concern for the republic in general

and the application of the rule of law in particular—as are moves to sanction Bush and Cheney for illegal war making and wiretapping—the process will begin at the grassroots and grow until it cannot be denied by Washington.

Madison, George Mason and the other founders—who so highly valued the tool of impeachment that they mentioned it six times in the Constitution they crafted—did not think of the impeachment and trial of a sitting president as some sort of political coup. They thought of it as a popular response to executive excess, which would be carried out by the representatives of the people—sitting in the House and Senate—with the purpose of ending the abuses, disempowering an out-of-control president and restoring a proper balance of powers.

Thomas Jefferson, who corresponded regularly with Madison regarding impeachment during the period when the Constitution was being drafted, dreaded the prospect that the president would become nothing more than an “elected despot” or “a king for four years.” While the

Constitution handed Congress the power to officially check such despotism, Jefferson and his colleagues fully expected the American people to be the champions of the application of the rule of law to an errant executive.

So the question is not: Where does Pelosi stand at the opening of this session of Congress? Rather, it is: Where do the people stand?

Polling tells us that Americans are a good deal more enthusiastic about holding this president to account than are the leaders of what is sometimes euphemistically referred to as an opposition party. A majority of Americans surveyed last fall in a national poll by the respected firm Ipsos Public Affairs, which measures public opinion on behalf of Associated Press, agreed with the statement: "If President Bush did not tell the truth about his reasons for going to war with Iraq, Congress should consider holding him accountable by impeaching him."

It was not entirely surprising that 72 percent of the Democrats were inclined toward impeachment. What was more interesting was that 56 percent of self-described Independents were ready to hold the president to account, as were 20 percent of Republicans. For comparison sake, it's worth noting that polling around the same time found that only 43 percent of Americans thought the Bush administration's flawed No Child Left Behind law—which Pelosi and her fellow Democratic leaders will be quick to tell you is most definitely on the table—was a major problem that needed to be addressed.

But polls are easily dismissed, even by the politicians who live by them. Harder to neglect are the signals from around the country, where citizens have been asked to vote on the question of whether impeachment of President Bush and Vice President Cheney is needed. Pelosi might want to take note of the message her own constituents sent on the same day that the Democrats' victory reversed a dozen years of Republican control of the House.

San Franciscans were asked on Nov. 7 to vote "yes" or "no" on Proposition J, a measure calling on the city's elected representatives to "use every available legal mechanism to effect the impeachment and removal from office of President Bush and Vice President Cheney for committing high crimes and misdemeanors in violation of the United States Constitution." The measure won with more than 58 per-

cent of the vote. Pelosi's hometown wasn't the only city to vote for impeachment on November 7. Calls for impeachment won voter approval from Cunningham Township, Illinois, to Berkeley, California, adding the names of those communities to the list of two-dozen municipalities nationwide that have now officially adopted impeachment resolutions.

Another measure of popular sentiment

the political class and the media fear, but as the cure for the crisis. This was as the founders intended when they inserted all those references to impeachment into a Constitution that does not mention God, corporations or the two-party system. They wanted Americans to know that they had a tool for challenging the tyranny of an "elected despot."

So, it falls to the people to restore a

It falls to the people to restore a proper understanding of the necessity of impeachment: by voting for local resolutions, passing petitions and protesting.

regarding impeachment—one that Pelosi should understand—came in the congressional elections of Nov. 7. More than three-dozen Democratic members of the House faced the voters as explicit advocates for keeping the impeachment option on the table. Thirty-eight members of the House signed on over the past year to H. Res. 635, a measure sponsored by Michigan Rep. John Conyers, the ranking Democrat on the Judiciary Committee. It proposed the establishment of a select committee to investigate whether members of the Bush administration made moves to invade Iraq before receiving congressional authorization, manipulated pre-war intelligence, encouraged the use of torture in Iraq and elsewhere, and used their positions to retaliate against critics of the war.

H. Res. 635 explicitly states that the select committee would be charged with making recommendations regarding grounds for the possible impeachment of Bush and Cheney.

So how did supporters of the "dangerous" principle that impeachment should be kept "on the table" fare at the polls?

One co-sponsor of the resolution, Rep. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), was elected to the Senate. Every other member of the House who signed on for an impeachment inquiry and faced the voters on Nov. 7 was reelected, in many cases with increased percentage of the vote.

It should come as no surprise that, when offered the option of impeachment, voters opt for it. Outside of Washington, there are still a lot of Americans who recognize impeachment not as the "Constitutional crisis" that so much of

proper understanding of the necessity of impeachment: by voting for local resolutions, working through state legislatures, passing petitions and protesting. The process will be helped along by the investigations of Bush administration misdeeds that will, as did the initial investigations of Watergate-related wrongs, provide steady re-confirmation of the crisis.

Before the House Judiciary Committee weighed the articles of impeachment against Nixon, a congressional break sent federal legislators back to their home districts. Many, including Tip O'Neill, went with some trepidation. They feared that the people would tell them that Congress had gone too far in questioning the authority and actions of the president. Instead, as O'Neill told a reporter for *Time* magazine, they found that the people were asking: "What are you waiting for?" As *Time* noted in that Watergate summer of 1974, members of the House learned from their constituents that "impeachment is good politics." Indeed, it became increasingly clear to Democrats, as well as smart Republicans, that it was riskier to refuse to impeach than it was to embrace the Constitutional imperative.

Nancy Pelosi and her compatriots may say that impeachment is off the table now. But, soon enough, if the people lead as Jefferson and Madison intended, congressional Democrats will again learn that impeachment remains good—and necessary—politics. ■

JOHN NICHOLS, who writes about politics for *The Nation*, is the author of the book, *The Genius of Impeachment: The Founders' Cure for Royalism* (*The New Press*).



We Are All Waiters Now

Why higher taxes would make Americans happier, and why, despite this, we still won't raise them

BY THOMAS GEOGHEGAN

NOW THAT THE DEMOCRATS run Congress, the question becomes, "What should they do?" Yes, raise the minimum wage. And yes, fix the Medicare drug program. But will this bind a new majority to the party?

We're often told, "Democrats have no ideas." But that's a silly thing to say. Washington, D.C., is crawling with foundation-types bubbling with new ideas, and if anything, the Democrats are awash with new ideas. Many of these new ideas may make their way into law. And we need not have the cynicism of Mario Cuomo, who once said, "In America, a new idea is a cereal that grows hair."

But what the Democrats don't have is a serious commitment—the political nerve—to make people happier in the only way they can: by raising people's taxes. How happy more of us would be if only we could pay higher taxes! More of us at last could joyfully retire.

In May 2005, the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) put out a

sort of Michelin Guide to the pensions of the world's 30 wealthiest nations: the United States, Ireland and their ilk. While the United States is rich, comparatively it's a beggar at the bottom, with a Burger King-type pension, paying on average 39 percent of after-tax income at retirement. Others pay about 70 percent on average. Germany, Sweden: pick a country. Some pay even more.

Yet the right says we can't do even 39 percent.

For Democrats, this ought to be the real Social Security crisis: Why aren't we at 70 percent? The OECD economists think that's what our debate should be. We have the money. We're the richest per capita—even if, "per capita," most of us get no capital. Why aren't we at least talking about 60 percent?

It's not Bush's fault. It's the Democrats'. They fail to grasp that in a rich country, if we spend them on ourselves, taxes make us happier. That's the point of a new book, *Happiness*, by a British economist Richard Layard. You can find much of the same thing in John Kenneth Galbraith's *The Affluent Society*. Consumers can't buy

happiness—only taxpayers can.

Our New Democrats? They don't get it. Kerry or Gore or Clinton will propose a tax increase, but only to be "responsible." It's a Boston Puritan kind of thing, like castor oil. We do it for the sake of rectitude. We do it because policy wonks at Harvard and Yale think we'll be the better for it. God forbid it give us any pleasure. No wonder we keep losing: If we have to raise taxes, why make it so joyless?

We propose to rob Peter, in the top 1 percent, without ever getting any fun out of paying Paul. I say: Let's give it to Paul, just to give him joy. Here's how we have to sell a tax increase: Not to be fiscally responsible, but to be a little happier. Be like the Europeans. Have a little fun.

Let's indulge in this higher GDP per capita. In richer countries, a strange thing happens: the higher the tax, the nicer it is to live there. And the more interesting life is. As the Nobelist Amartya Sen might say, the whole purpose of GDP per capita is to let us live at a higher level. When we spend our GDP on ourselves (as we do with pensions), higher taxes increase our higher powers.

Without higher taxes, then, for all our wealth we end up starving, wasting away like anorexics, refusing to let ourselves enjoy a cornucopia. We run down our public universities. We destroy our mass transit. (Sitting in traffic, do we enjoy making ourselves mentally ill?) But the worst of it is that we cheat ourselves of the taxes we could spend on ourselves.

Our collective failure is that we have chosen not to flourish: We have denied ourselves what Aristotle calls *eudaimon*, because the Greeks didn't have a word for "fun." There is only one question to ask: Will a tax like this make us happier? "Oh Americans don't think that way." Don't they? As a labor lawyer, I meet men my age, in their 50s, who murmur, "My God, if only I'd started saving."

They'd be glad now if a higher Social Security tax had cut into net pay as the old private pensions, which unions negotiated into contracts, once used to do. With the collapse of labor, we got rid of the union-contract pension. At the same time, we didn't raise Social Security to do what a labor movement used to do: namely, force people to save. Now we get, well, 39 percent, instead of the 50 or 60 percent we would have gotten if we had kept our labor movement or raised our taxes.

Oh no, we're told, people are happier

going out and buying an extra pair of white socks at Wal-Mart. Trust me: as a labor lawyer, I represent a lot of people who shop at Wal-Mart. They aren't as stupid as most economists think. They'd be happy to pay more in taxes if they could spend it on themselves.

But surely that must be mad: People want their money. They don't think of their future, or the lives they'll lead 20,

don't want taxes raised because they don't trust that our nation's leaders will give them value for their money.

Before there were New Democrats, we used to know this. Even the OECD's joyless number crunchers tell us, "Why not raise the kind of taxes where you spend it on yourselves?" Remember, these are free market, center-right types, and even they think we're making ourselves miserable.

We propose to rob Peter, in the top 1 percent, without ever getting any fun out of paying Paul. I say: Let's give it to Paul, just to give him joy.

30 years from now. But why are Americans different from Austrians, Canadians, Swedes or anyone else? From what I see of Teamsters and nurses, I think Americans *especially* want someone to plan for them. It's a little like alcoholics who want someone to stop them from drinking. "Stop me from moving thirty miles away."

"Stop me from buying another SUV."

The Democrats should have done, or now should do, what the labor movement used to do with union pensions: step in, raise their taxes, so people can be happy and spend it on themselves.

Even Bush and the Republicans know that we should get pleasure out of taxes: That's why, even when they cut taxes for the rich, they keep on running deficits. Besides, at a certain level of GDP per capita, people acquire a taste for more government. Even Republicans have a taste for more government. That's why Bush and his billionaires are at war with their base. But the crack-up that's coming is not just in the Republican Party. It's really in the country.

Like idiots, we have furiously denied it. Let's stop denying it so furiously. People

Why we should step up to the plate


A few years ago the Republicans were taunting us: "Why don't you Democrats step up to the plate and tell us how you would fix Social Security?" They'd love us to stand up on behalf of this public pension that pays so much less than that of other countries: a pitiful 39 percent of working income. It would be okay if 39 percent let us live happily ever after. But it's not enough for that purpose.

And when Bush's Social Security plan went down, people on the left high-fived each other. "Hey, the Republicans have finally lost one!" But alas, it was the opposite: the Republicans have won.

They've won in three ways:

First, they've defined the issue. It's burned into people's brains: We can't raise the public pension any higher; we really can't afford it at 39 percent. So the GOP has won. We aren't going to raise it. We're going to stay stuck in the public pension cellar.

Second, they've already put the benefit cuts in place. They cut the Cost of Living



The Pursuit of Peace

Cat Lovers Against the BOMB
2007 Wall Calendar

2007 CAT LOVERS AGAINST THE BOMB WALL CALENDAR

\$7.95 EACH + \$1.50 postage.

Published by Nebraskans for Peace. Order from: CLAB, PO Box 83466, Lincoln, NE 68501. Toll free (877) 778-3434; Fax (402) 483-4108. E-mail: catcal@aol.com.

index in a way that simply doesn't reflect the real costs—housing, nursing care, etc.—that pensioners really face.

Third, they're free to keep on wrecking what's left of the private pension system, at least for the middle class. The old union-contract pension, which was a defined benefit pension, is mostly gone, of course. That's left us just with the defined-contribution or "401(k)" accounts. But by slashing taxes on business and the super rich, Bush took away the tax incentives that employers had for setting up these private 401(k) accounts. Bush claims to be the champion of "private accounts." The truth is, by cutting taxes, Bush took a big whack out of the remnant of the private pension system.

So already, thanks to the Democrats staying mum, the Republicans have won the Social Security debate. Maybe in all of America I'm the only Democrat supporter who would like to see the Democrats come up with a plan to "save" Social Security. But the plan I would offer is not to "save" it but to raise it. I would simply say: Don't Save It. Raise It. Higher.

Call it: The Democrats' 50 Percent Solution. Call it that because we raise the payout up from 39 to 50 percent of working income. We promise America: If you work for a living, you get back half when you retire. It's a 50 Percent Solution in another way, for 50 Percent would close only some of the gap between us and our "average" rival. If we pay only 50, we are still far, far short of what Italy, Austria and others pay.

Yes, but how do we pay for half? I wouldn't tell people how. I'd put that one off, or use the old stand-by: "We'll appoint a bipartisan commission to decide."

We could even set a time limit. Say, by the year 2045, we will be paying half. In other words, tell the kids of the country, the 20-somethings, who don't vote: Vote for us now, to get half when you retire.

I can see them, in their golden years, playing games on their computers.

But how to pay? We have to say something. I'd like to see our commission answer this: Why isn't it fair if we make the top 1 percent pay for the *entire* raise for the bottom "50 percent." I mean, both to "fix" the existing Social Security deficit and "raise" it up to half. After all, by the time the Social Security crisis hits in 2045, the top 1 percent will probably take in

the same share of national income—the *same* share, of the U.S. economy's total income—as the "lower 50 percent." They will get what perhaps 200 million Americans will get! When that happens, will the top 1 percent need a bigger pension? No. They'll have even more of the national wealth, if not every single damned gold doubloon of it.

So let the top 1 percent pay for half the nation. Let them pick up the bill for the entire Social Security deficit which is being projected now and then pay for half of what it takes to get to 50 percent. (Maybe,



on a sliding scale, the next nine-tenths of the top 10 percent who are just below Warren Buffet could chip in a bit as well.) That would get us up to, say, 45 percent, still below the wealthy-nation average of 70 percent. The rest of us would have to cough up the rest—but remember, these are the kind of taxes we'd be spending on ourselves.

Isn't that a fair trade-off? The plutocrats are still plutocrats, but they pay us a pension. "But you're destroying the 'contributory' nature of Social Security." I beg to differ. It's still contributory for us, up to 39 percent if my math is right. And there's a surcharge for "them," the top 1 percent or so, who will now put it in the Social Security Trust instead of their narcissistic foundations.

Yes, they may have to give up some of their works of charity, but then life is unfair. People in the top 1 percent already

know that. Besides, they can always move up to Canada, or somewhere. Of course they would have to pay higher taxes. The day will come for America's very rich when nowhere in the world is safe.

But can we really tax the rich?

No.

We are too scared to tax the rich. And the more money the rich take from us, the harder they are to tax.

It's not that they "buy off" the politicians: they don't completely. It's not, as sociologists believe, that people think, "Oh, in America, I could be rich, and I don't want to pay the tax." Sociologists claim someone making \$50,000 a year, or \$25,000 a year believes: I can be like Gates or Soros. Or my kids will be.

It's burned into our brains that Americans believe this.

I have a question: In your own life, do you know anyone out there in a suburb with a mortgage who believes this? I sometimes go out to barbecues and parties with clients, and I think of "businessmen" and guys in sales and ask myself, "Do they believe that?"

No, not for themselves. Or their kids. Usually they're disappointed in their kids. Over age 40, people know they aren't going anywhere. Under 40, from what I can tell, the young are even more bitter.

Yet they're terrified to tax the rich, and far more terrified on the whole than their ancestors of the New Deal and post-New Deal used to be. So why, if they have everything to gain from taxing the rich, are they so terrified?

Because the more money the rich take from us, the more it changes our moral character—we lose the courage it takes to engage in self-government.

I borrow an old idea of the French, writers like Rousseau, Voltaire, Tocqueville, Guizot and many others: They believed that the particular "constitution" or form of government—monarchy, aristocracy, etc.—literally shapes our personality. Citizens have one type of personality under Louis XV, a different under George III. In 1760, I could turn to my French peasant wife and say: "Oh, the Bourbon monarchy has no effect on me." But in a sense it would affect my whole personality. Or let's say it's 1939, and I'm hypothetically living under Stalin. At this point, if I am

a normal, weak human being, I might secretly hate Stalin, but I'd be also quite willing at times, despite myself, to rat on a friend, or even turn in my wife.

Though I'd like to think not, I'd probably take on the personality that lets me fit in to Stalin's way of doing things.

Now it's 2006, and I'm an American. We don't have monarchy, or aristocracy—but it's not a democracy. Most of the time, as in the latest election, most of us don't vote. Most of us don't know the names of our local candidates for Congress.

Even if you do know the names, don't think you're better than the rest. You are still living under a form of government where most people don't vote. Even if you're different, our collective disconnect with our own government has some bearing on your moral character as well.

Aristotle would not call us a democracy. Or a republic, really. I believe Aristotle and the Greeks would describe the America of this century as a plutocracy. The top 1 percent has nearly all the wealth. That's our form of government.

Classical plutocracy.

I take on the personality that lets me fit into a plutocracy. I'm not the owner of a business or a farm. I'm not a member of a labor union. I'm a servant, or a salesman. I sell myself to people in one way or another. In a plutocracy, everyone is a salesman. Everyone is a waiter. We live off not wages we negotiate but on commissions and tips. In this new economy, we don't even see how our character is changing, or how we are constantly selling ourselves for bigger tips: "I hope you like me." But it's turning us effectively into waiters in restaurants. There's a problem with waiters, which George Orwell notes: They identify with the diners, and they vote for the right. Orwell hated waiters. He liked the back of the house. That's where the minorities and foreign workers are.

The white males in the country—and I use this as a term of art to include people of all races—are working tables in the front.

Unlike Orwell, I like waiters. It's partly because in the America of 2006, I have had to adapt my own personality to the plutocracy we're in. But as much as I try to sell myself and please others, I wonder what it's doing to me, and so many others. If we're spending all our time trying to figure out how to please the rich, how to seduce them into giving us money, how to say, "I'm Bob, I'm your waiter for the eve-

ning"—if we even stoop to touching our customers on the shoulder, so we can get an even bigger tip—we aren't likely to be the people to confront them politically.

Many a sociologist has it wrong: It's not that I expect that I or my children will live *like* the Super Rich. It's rather that I have to *like* the Super Rich—I have no choice but to like them if I want a big tip.

It's a variation on a point that sociolo-

It's not that I expect that I or my children will live *like* the Super Rich. It's rather that I have to like the Super Rich—I have no choice but to *like* them if I want a big tip.

gist Richard Sennet makes. We bow, we scrape, but now we do it in the corporate world as a "team." People learn to be flexible, which means "likeable." As we get more income inequality and more "service" jobs, all our business majors really learn is how to be flexible and likeable—to sell ourselves, to seduce, so we can be Donald Trump's apprentice.

These are nasty habits for citizens to develop. Even the left, even the far left, is like this: So far as I can tell, activists spend all their time courting the foundations, and like waiters in restaurants, stroking, touching people, so they can get a bigger grant. In terms of the moral character, we on the left are no better than the politicians are.

Of course you dear reader are not like this. "I'm more like Orwell," you think. Yes, there's a model for our time. Be a writer; that's worse than being a waiter. They spend their lives playing up to editors, being flexible, wallowing in self pity as others get ahead. While writers have always been like this, the danger of a plutocracy is that we're all like writers now.

We need to put down the de Toqueville. It's not like that any more. It's not the America of Jefferson: We aren't small farmers. Or the America of Lincoln: We aren't the free-labor, free-soil types. Or of FDR: We aren't the industrial workers organizing for higher wages. It's the America of the Bush family, of big country clubs and estates: It's the America where even the so-called "middle class" are more or less waiting tables.

So we adapt our personality. If we vote to soak the rich, they may cut back their tips! I lose out. It's because I *don't* believe in mobility (mine or yours) that I dare

not soak the rich.

Besides, if I try to soak the rich, what good will it do me? Let's suppose I confront them. I put in a government that raises their taxes. There's no guarantee I'm doing any good for me. That is, there is so much inequality, the money may go to the poor. Or just as likely, it may go back to the rich. If the government raises my taxes, how do I know they will spend

it on me, in the middle? That's why it is easier to raise taxes in Germany or Sweden, or even Canada. People know: If they spend it, they have to spend it, like it or not, on people like me.

So the more inequality, the more unnerving it is to raise taxes. It destroys the presumption that those in the middle will get it back. Whatever the motive, the result is the same. People are afraid in a plutocracy to raise taxes on the rich. The more money people in the top 1 percent have, the more impregnable they are to progressive-type taxation.

It seems odd that a majority in polls want to help the rich end the estate tax. Why? The simplest explanation is probably this: They don't know what the estate tax is, or who it affects. That's what makes it hard in our time to explain any redistribution scheme. For me as a lawyer, it has been scary to read the studies on juries—over and over, they find most people on juries can't follow the simplest instructions. Only 50, sometimes 25 percent comprehension. That's why the Democrats lose out on their complex public policy solutions that only Paul Krugman can understand. In some way it has to be simpler. Maybe there has to be a break-down, one by one, for every American, with his or her name on it: "Put in your work record to see how much more you'll get." Surely, we ought to be able to come up with a My Space for taxpayers.

Every day, before we go off to work, each one of us could visit. "It's all mine at 67, if only I can hang on." ■

THOMAS GEOGHEGAN is a Chicago-based labor lawyer. His most recent book is *The Law in Shambles (Prickly Paradigm)*.



**the value of a man resides in what he gives and
not in what he is capable of receiving.**

– ALBERT EINSTEIN

GIVE THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING.

With 12 issues delivered straight to their mailbox, your loved ones will receive:

- timely investigative reporting
- provocative essays
- debates about our political future
- humorous anecdotes and much more.

**SAVE
47% OFF
THE COVER
PRICE!**

**ONE-YEAR ONLY
\$24.95**

**USE THE CARD TO
THE RIGHT OF THIS
PAGE TO GIVE THE
GIFT OF *IN THESE
TIMES NOW!***

The Godless Fundamentalist

In *The Root of All Evil*, biologist Richard Dawkins reveals his own lust for certainty

BY LAKSHMI CHAUDHRY



RELIGION FUCKING BLOWS!" DECLARES comedian Roseanne Barr in her latest HBO special. Her pronouncement, both in its declarative certainty and self-congratulatory defiance, could easily serve as the succinct moral of Richard Dawkins' documentary, *The Root of All Evil*.

The big-screen version of a two-part British television series follows the noted biologist as he embarks on a global road-trip to the veritable bastions of theological conviction—the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, a Christian conservative stronghold in Colorado Springs, a Hassidic community in the heart of London—bullying, berating and heckling the devoutly faithful he encounters along his way.

Confronting cancer patients who have traveled to Lourdes in hopes of a cure, Dawkins tells the viewer in the first scene, "It may seem tough to question the beliefs of these poor, desperate people's faith." By the end of the documentary, Dawkins' bravado is not in doubt. When talking to Ted Haggard, a New Life Church pastor (more recently infamous for his predilection for crystal meth and gay prostitutes), after witnessing one of his sermons, Dawkins tells him, "I was al-

most reminded of the Nuremberg rallies ... Dr. Goebbels would have been proud." To a hapless guide at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, he taunts, "Do you *really* believe that Jesus' body lay here?" And then there's his remark—"I'm really worried for the well-being of your children"—to a Hassidic school teacher, Rabbi Herschel Gluck, whom Dawkins accuses of brainwashing innocent kids.

As he storms his way around the world in the state of high dudgeon, Dawkins' attitude can be best described as apocalyptic outrage. The effect is in turns bewildering, embarrassing, grating and even unintentionally comic, as we watch the distinguished Oxford University Charles Simonyi Professor of the Public Understanding of Science channel his inner Borat. When the astonished rabbi exclaims, "You are a fundamentalist believer," even a sympathetic, true-blue San Francisco audience cannot help but chuckle in assent.

As his rabbinical nemesis rightly suspects, Dawkins' fondness for sweeping generalizations reflects his own deep-seated fundamentalism, a virulent form of atheism that mirrors the polarized worldview of the religious extremists it claims to oppose. "They condemn not just belief in

God, but *respect* for belief in God. Religion is not just wrong; it's evil," writes Gary Wolf in his *Wired Magazine* cover story, "The New Atheism," whose leading exponents include—in addition to Dawkins—Daniel Dennett, a philosophy professor at Yale, punk rocker Greg Graffin and Sam Harris, author of *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason*. These are the self-styled "Brights," the moniker of choice for Dawkins to describe "a person whose worldview is free of supernatural and mystical elements."

The "bright" worldview is also remarkably free of complexity. Dawkins' view of faith can be summed up thus: Religion is dangerous because it requires that we suspend our powers of reason to place our faith in the shared delusion that is God. This, he asserts, is the first step on that "slippery slope" to hatred and violence.

When we cede our "critical faculties" to believe in the idea of a higher power, Dawkins claims, we are immediately invested in a panoply of increasingly ludicrous propositions: that the Virgin Mary ascended directly to heaven, Moses parted the seas, God created the world in seven days, or beautiful virgins await good Muslims in heaven. Why not, he

asks, believe in fairies or hobgoblins?

Faith, in his universe, is interchangeable with superstition, eccentricity, madness, and, at its most benign, infantilism. Religious conviction is a marker of human backwardness, both in a historical and psychological sense. According to Dawkins, human beings invented religion as a “crutch” for ignorance. Without science to help us understand the world around us, we turned to gods/faith/superstition to cope with our sense of helplessness. Today, religion remains a source of succor to those unable to outgrow their childish desire to see the world in terms of “black and white, as a battle between good and evil”—unlike atheists who are “responsible adults and accept that life is complex.”

“We’re brought from cradle to believe that there is something good about faith,” says Dawkins, as he compares this belief to “a virus that infects the young, for generation after generation.” Fortunate are the “responsible adults” who grow up to shake off these beliefs, unlike the rest of humanity who remain trapped in their infantile desire to be taken care of by an all-powerful deity.

Unlike fairytales, however, our religious beliefs are not harmless, says Dawkins, they instead lay the foundation for the murder and mayhem inevitably wreaked by true believers. His evi-

dence: the Inquisition, the Holocaust, the Crusades, the 9/11 attacks, and less spectacular crimes against humanity like suicide bombers, anti-abortion killers, and so on.

This broad-stroked caricature of faith is delivered with a breathtaking disregard for historical context, in which social, political or economic conditions are simply

world in terms of a battle of Good vs. Evil, cloaked here as Science vs. Religion. Where Religion is corrupt, tyrannical and false, Science offers intellectual integrity, freedom and truth. As Robinson notes, Dawkins fails to acknowledge Science’s less admirable achievements, be they eugenics, Hiroshima, or the more mundane travesties committed by unethical doc-

Unlike fairytales, our religious beliefs are not harmless, says Richard Dawkins, they instead lay the foundation for the murder and mayhem inevitably wreaked by true believers.

ignored or discounted. “[Dawkins] has a simple-as-that, plain-as-day approach to the grandest questions, unencumbered by doubt, consistency, or countervailing information,” writes Marilynne Robinson in the November *Harpers’*, while reviewing his bestselling book, *The God Delusion*. And on screen he is no different. Of course, there are sound political causes for the Palestinian conflict, Dawkins hurriedly acknowledges—only to assert in the same breath that the real culprit is religion, which teaches its adherents to think, “I’m right and you’re wrong.”

Not unlike the religious simpletons he claims to disdain, Dawkins sees the

tors or fat-cat researchers in service of corporate funding.

“Dawkins implicitly defines science as a clear-eyed quest for truth, chaste as an algorithm, while religion is atavistic, mad, and mired in crime,” Robinson writes.

In this version of atheist theology, Science attains the same status as Dawkins’ loathed “alpha male in sky,” whose laws rule all things known and unknown. If we do not quite understand how the universe was created or the human brain works—or the competing, contradictory claims about the virtues of, say, table salt—all we need to do is wait and keep faith in the scientific method, which will reveal all in good time. The ways of Science are no less sacred or mysterious than that of God.

Like his fellow fundamentalists, Dawkins has no use for moderation or its practitioners. The people of faith featured in his documentary are strict, true believers, who adhere to the most rigid interpretations of their respective faiths. There are no Muslim doctors, church-going geneticists or Catholics who support abortion rights. Anyone who believes in evolution and God is just as deluded or in denial, and, as he tells *Wired*, “really on the side of the fundamentalists.”

Nothing less than a complete renunciation of all things spiritual will suffice. “As long as we accept the principle that religious faith must be respected simply because it is religious faith, it is hard to withhold respect from the faith of Osama bin Laden and the suicide bombers,” he writes in *The God Delusion*, in an eerie echo of President Bush’s post-9/11 point of view: “You’re either with us or against us.”

It would be silly to argue that the new atheists’ crusade is as dangerous as the

Dawkins:
Godless and proud

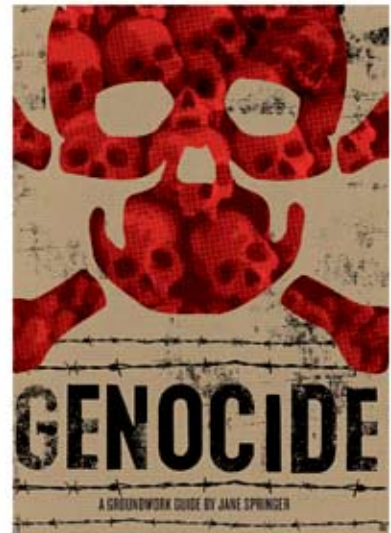
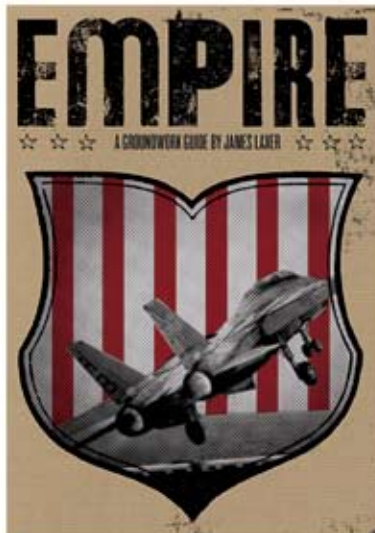
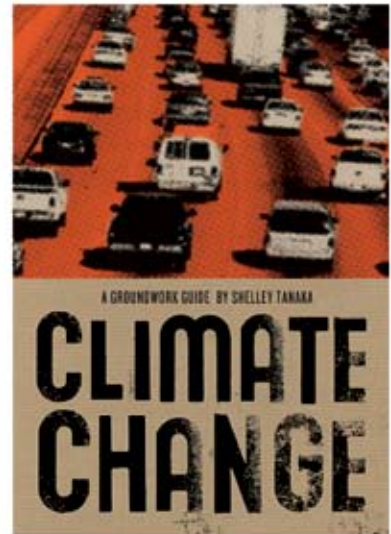


Understand what everyone is talking about

The **Groundwork Guides** are engaging and concise surveys of contemporary social and political issues that offer both a lively introduction to these subjects and a strong point of view.

www.groundwoodbooks.com

**GROUNDWORK
GUIDES**



so-called war on terror, but that crusade does give aid and comfort to fundamentalists everywhere by affirming their view of faith: one, science and religion are mutually opposed and exclusive worldviews; two, religion is immutable and outside history; and therefore, three, the Bible (or the Quran, for that matter) must be taken literally, and is not open to interpretation. For both camps, ignoring one law or moderating a single injunction is the first step toward rejecting the faith in its entirety.

This great war of ontologies, seductive though it may be in our beleaguered times, becomes immediately absurd if we remind ourselves of one simple fact: Science and Religion are historical in

the richest sense of the word. They both inform and reflect our changing ideas about ourselves and the world around us. From the practice of throwing a woman on her husband's funeral pyre in India to determining intelligence by the shape of person's skull in Europe—both of which seem hateful today—religious and scientific beliefs ebb, rise and transmute themselves over time. To pretend otherwise is to ignore the vast bulk of what we call History, which the Brights seem just as willing to rewrite as their theological adversaries.

As innately human endeavors, religion and science are therefore as unreasonable, noble, immoral, kind, tyrannical,

odious, compassionate—in other words, irredeemably human—as the people who literally embody them. Yes, the laws of nature and those of God might still exist without human beings, but there would be no one to name or know them as such, or act on that knowledge. Taken together, they express our need to both submit and to control, to know and to believe, to be in the visible world and to transcend it.

That the vast majority of us would find it difficult to choose between the two should be hardly surprising. The antidote to fanaticism is not a new puritanism of reason, but the contradictory, ambiguous, compromised reality of ordinary human experience. ■

BY JEHANGIR POCHA

Rebiya Kadeer: Uighur Dalai Lama

Rebiya Kadeer has been likened to the Dalai Lama, and the comparison grew more apt when the Uighur (pronounced wee-gur) human rights activist became a close contender for this year's Nobel Peace Prize, an award conferred on the Dalai Lama in 1989.

Yet in the United States, Kadeer and her cause remain relatively unknown. Like the Dalai Lama, Kadeer is challenging the Chinese government's moral and legal right to rule her people—the Uighurs, an ethnically Turkic-Persian people in western China, whose homeland, Xinjiang, was annexed by China in 1949. The backlash against this annexation exploded in the mid-'90s, when Uighur separatists carried out widespread protests. Some Uighur extremists, who were supported by Islamic extremists in Pakistan, even bombed Chinese targets.

China reacted harshly, jailing thousands of Uighurs and using paramilitary forces to disband protestors. In 1999, when Kadeer, then a wealthy businesswoman and member of China's parliament, began speaking out on behalf of her people, she was jailed.

In 2005, the Chinese freed Kadeer, largely because of pressure from the United States. Since then Kadeer has lived in Washington D.C., where she has spearheaded a peaceful campaign against China's rule in Xinjiang. Yet hundreds of Uighur activists remain in jail and serious human rights violations are being committed in the province, according to Amnesty International.

Why is the situation in Xinjiang not as well known as that of Tibet?

The Chinese government is more careful about what it does in Tibet than in Xinjiang because of the Dalai Lama. When the Chinese government invaded East Turkestan [in 1949] and turned us into the Xinjiang province of China, they promised us

autonomy—that we would be masters of our land, control our natural resources, like oil, protect our social ways and develop our own economy—basically run everything in our region as we wanted. But the reality is the Chinese government has denied us basic rights and freedoms. Our oil and resources have become a curse for us because the Chinese government just wants to rob them.

The worst thing is that [in 1949] only five percent of our population was Chinese; the rest were all from the Turkic ethnic family, with Uighurs as the majority. Since then, the Chinese government has transferred so many Han Chinese into our land that they are now the majority and have made Uighurs a minority in our own land. By official Chinese statistics, Xinjiang now has 8.7 million Uighurs and 7.5 million Chinese. In reality, if you count the number of migrant Chinese workers in Xinjiang, they outnumber us.

The Chinese say they want to integrate Uighurs into China and develop the region. In the '90s you yourself were a member of China's parliament and your trading company made you the seventh richest person in the country. What happened?

Initially, I believed in the Chinese government, and thought that if I reported the human rights violations taking place in Xinjiang, Beijing would pay attention. But in 1997, a massacre took place in Ghulja City and several hundred Uighur youth were killed and several thousand were arrested. When I went to China's People's

Congress and told the high-level Chinese officials what happened and how wrong the massacre was, they ignored me. That's when I realized they wouldn't change their policies—that was the breaking point.

They soon jailed you?

I was arrested on August 11, 1999. By then my husband had already fled to the U.S. [in 1996] because of the pressure on him.

Were you mistreated in prison?

I was not tortured. Instead the guards would torture other Uighurs in front of me, to scare me and psychologically torture me. The prison guards would taunt me, saying, "If you are so powerful and strong, why don't you help these people now?"

Then, in 2005 I was freed because, I'm told, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice made my release a pre-condition for her visit to China. I came here [to Washington, D.C.] as soon as I was freed.

The Chinese government still brands you a terrorist and a criminal who has cheated banks out of millions.

The Chinese government has been slandering me with their propaganda. In truth, I am opposed to terrorism in all shapes and forms. I want our struggle to be peaceful and patient. Unfortunately, since my husband and I have left the country, the Chinese government is now threatening three of our children. First, they waited to see if I would get the Nobel Peace Prize. Now that I have not, they have gone ahead and accused my children of all kinds of things and on October 26 began trying them in court. [There has been no verdict yet.]

My children are innocent. But I don't know what kind of outcome their trial will produce. The Chinese government can fabricate any kind of false charges and any kind of outcome. They do as they please.

Will you stop campaigning if things get bad for your children in China?



Rebiya Kadeer, exiled Uighur leader and candidate for the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize.

Never. I will never give up. I will continue my path, for it is correct and righteous. The suffering of my children is not their own, it is symbolic of the suffering of all my people.

How has your cause been received by the U.S. government?

The U.S. government and the American people are quite concerned with the situation of the Uighur people. A lot of these issues have been raised during the U.S.-China bilateral dialogue, including the case of my arrested children. Some 72 congressmen and women have written to [China's President] Hu Jintao asking him to release my children.

When I was released, I had no money in my pocket because the Chinese government confiscated all of my possessions. Now, with the generous financial support of the National Endowment for Democracy, we have been able to have an office in Washington and operate globally. I am extremely grateful for NED support. We also hope to begin getting donations from other Uighurs living abroad. It won't be much, because we are not as well settled abroad as, say, the Tibetans. But it will help us in many ways.

How would you like to see the international community criticize China?

I'd appeal to the international community to take a proactive approach and raise human rights violations directly with the Chinese government in their dialogues. The international community should demand the Chinese government honor Uighur autonomy, respect Uighur culture, give Uighur people the right to develop their own economy, and to have freedom of speech, and press China to stop relocating young Uighur teenagers to Mainland China and instead invest in their education in East Turkistan itself. And of course, they should request Chinese government to stop transferring Han Chinese into our territory. That is crucial.

How is the Chinese government relocating Uighur children?

There are few decent schools in East Turkistan, so every year the Chinese government takes 5,000 to 10,000 Uighur minors to mainland Chinese cities to get 'educated.' Basically they are brainwashed. If the Chinese want to educate Uighurs, why don't they build good schools in the Uighur Autonomous Region?

You have accused the Chinese government of keeping Uighurs out of jobs.

It's an appalling situation. East Turkistan is now the largest oil-producing region in China. Not only do we not get any royal-

ties from the oil, Uighurs cannot even get the lowest jobs in the oil companies because they are reserved for the Chinese migrants the government is bringing in to dilute our identity.

You and others have also complained about China's strictures against the practice of Islam.

The government sees Islam as a threat. So they are strictly restricting the practice of the religion in order to make our people faithless. The government imprisons Uighurs who teach their children about religion. Minors and people who work for the government are forbidden from going to the mosque and are expected to follow atheism. This is not just Communist ideology. It singles us Muslims out, as the government does not forbid Chinese officials from going to Buddhist or Taoist temples.

Why?

Uighur culture, faith and tradition are very unlike Chinese ones. In the Chinese government's eyes, anything that emphasizes these differences is frowned upon. Basically the government restricts Uighurs from learning about democracy, human rights, anything like that. Again, this is not just Communist ideology. Chinese people enjoy much more freedom in what they can read, write and publish.

Do you think you don't get as much international support as the Tibetans because the West fears that if Xinjiang became independent it would become an Islamic state?

Uighurs are not going to establish an Islamic state and the international community should realize that. If East Turkestan [Xinjiang] becomes independent it would be more like Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan rather than like Pakistan or Saudi Arabia. You can see how few of our women are veiled. Uighurs are more secular than religious because of China's atheist indoctrination. Many don't know much about religion and will want a secular state.

What are your best hopes for taking your movement forward?

I hope China will march toward democracy and truly respect people's human rights. But that will take some time, I think. In the short run, I will continue our own struggle with peace and patience. ■

JEHANGIR POCHA is a contributing editor to In These Times.



BY DAVID MOBERG

Live At Your Own Risk

For three decades, the gap between the rich and everyone else has grown in the United States. At the same time, working people have faced greater economic uncertainty, their incomes have fluctuated more dramatically, and both

employers and governments have cut back on measures such as pensions and health insurance that helped mitigate the uncertainties of life. Yale political scientist Jacob Hacker calls this the great risk shift—transferring the burden of risks in life from collective institutions to individuals.

Hacker observes that “Social Security, Medicare, private health insurance, traditional guaranteed pensions—all sent the same reassuring message: someone is watching out for you, *all of us are watching out for you*, when things go bad. Today, the message is starkly different: *You are on your own.*”

The greatest victims of this shift are the poor, and the biggest beneficiaries are the rich. However, in *The Great Risk Shift*, Hacker uses statistics and illuminating anecdotes to show how the shift also threatens the “middle class.”

Many of the same changes in the economy increase both inequality and risk. However increased individual exposure to economic uncertainty raises slightly different political questions. It endangers and often wreaks real hardship on many who thought their lives were secure. These middle class workers found their health insurance was inadequate, their jobs were off-shored, or, like many Enron employees, their 401(k) retirement accounts collapsed with their employer.

As a result, Americans are increasingly anxious. Everyone except the rich are at risk, and no individual solution, including education, can adequately compensate for the insecurities that loom over Americans’ lives.

Hacker’s important and illuminating book—with its call for creating an “insurance and opportunity

society”—should inform every discussion of progressive political strategy in the coming decade. More expansive social insurance may not be a full progressive program, but it is a compelling rejoinder to what Hacker calls the Personal Responsibility Movement.

Two other new books hit on similar themes from different angles. In *All Together Now*, Jared Bernstein, a senior economist at the Economic Policy Institute, offers a trenchant critique of the economic, political and moral shortcomings of conservative social and economic policy that he dubs YOYO, or “you’re on your own.” He wittily contrasts them a progressive strategy that recognizes that “we’re in this together”: WITT.

In *The American Dream vs. The Gospel of Wealth*, former Amherst College economist Norton Garfinkle, now chairman of the Future of American Democracy Foundation, succinctly describes the way American history has alternated between two visions of the nation’s economy. Abraham Lincoln articulated the American Dream that, as Garfinkle summarizes it, “all Americans will have the opportunity through hard work to build a comfortable middle-class life” so long as government acts, as Lincoln said, “to clear the path” for their progress. In contrast to this dream, steel baron Andrew Carnegie espoused the Gospel of Wealth: in the interests of a growing economy, government should get out of the way, let the rich prosper and leave everyone else to the fate of the marketplace—a vision revived under Reagan and refined by George W. Bush.

An unchecked market destabilizes national economies. Hacker shows how risk has grown on several different fronts for most Americans, starting with incomes, which have become much more unpredictable from year to year. Conservatives see such instability as the result of flawed personal choices, but Hacker shows that even risk-averse people experience wild income swings. The right also blames divorce, but divorce rates were declining as economic instability climbed. Alternatively, conservatives argue that economic insecurity is merely a sign of social mobility, but social mobility has actually decreased in the United States, and many wealthy countries with more generous

social insurance programs have higher social mobility than the United States.

Corporate attacks on workers and conservative policies both contribute to the growing insecurity. For example, workers are now much more likely to have

Even the family, Hacker notes, is less of a ‘haven in a heartless world.’ Because families have needed to cover necessities, women’s work is no longer a buffer for hard times.

personal retirement accounts than traditional pensions that pay a defined benefit. The result: both less equality and higher risk at retirement. And despite their setbacks, conservatives are still pushing for private accounts that would do the same to Social Security. Yet Social Security remains a shining example of how insurance provided through government can efficiently reduce risk, enhance social welfare and modestly boost equality, often far better than private insurance can.

After doctors, businesses and conservatives blocked national health insurance in the New Deal era, the private, employer-based system that arose instead has in recent decades become less comprehensive, more expensive and less dependable. Today, roughly half of individuals filing bankruptcy do so for medical reasons, and three-fourths of those filing had insurance at the start of their illness. But the right wants to shift even more responsibility to individuals with Health Savings Accounts and other “consumer driven” health insurance.

Hacker notes that the combined public-private safety net system in the United States is “more expansive” than in many European countries. But because private interests so distort our system, it is less able to deliver equal protection.

Even the family, Hacker notes, is less of a “haven in a heartless world” (in the words of Christopher Lasch). Because families have needed two incomes to cover necessities, especially as men’s wages have declined in real terms, women’s work is no longer a buffer for hard times. Instead, credit cards and other debt become the family safety net, putting family finances at even further risk.

Hacker blames the shift on “ideology.” But as important as right-wing, free-market ideology has been, his own analysis points to corporations and capital markets as the driving force. The corporate offensive, starting in the ’70s, coincided

not only with the rise of free-market fundamentalism but also with the growing impact of globalization. The shift in risk ultimately stems from a shift in economic and political power.

Hacker offers many ingenious policies to help reduce and share risks, from wage insurance to Medicare Plus (which moves Medicare towards universal health insurance) and an intriguing plan for Universal Insurance against economic catastrophe. He argues that freeing individuals and families from financial risks can make it easier for them to take on other risks, such as getting an education, that ultimately help the economy.

Bernstein and Garfinkle place an even greater emphasis on the economic benefits—such as growth and investment—that would result from greater government intervention to promote equality and to share risks. Free-market fundamentalism does not deliver as well, even on its preferred terms of jobs, growth and investment, as does a more egalitarian social economy aimed at raising living standards for everyone.

In the end, questions about economic policy involve more than investment or GDP growth, important as those may be. They involve morality and politics, like whether economic policies strengthen democracy. And on that count, all three writers make convincing cases that when dealing with the great risk shift, and making real the American Dream, it’s essential to remember, “we’re all in this together.” ■

DAVID MOBERG is a senior editor at *In These Times*. He writes on politics, labor and class in the United States.

read the latest underground classic

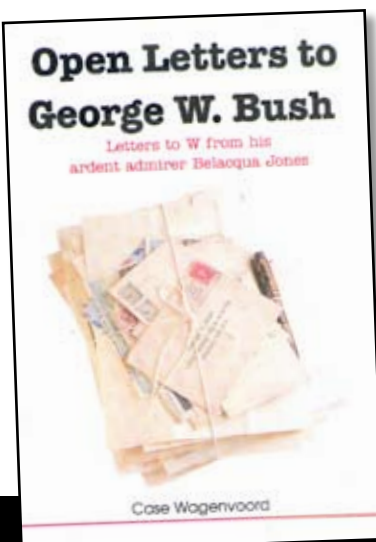
Imagine Karl Rove on methamphetamines and you have Bush's shadow advisor, Belacqua Jones. Belacqua peppers the president with daily letters of encouragement and advice in which:

- He praises the president's Eternal War of the Empty Policy
- He tells the president how to shoot Jesus full of theological steroids
- He mourns the martyrdom of St. Thomas De Lay

This is a must read for those seeking a dark vision of American politics and life seen through the cracked lens of substance abuse and a Neocon ideology run amok.

AVAILABLE AT AMAZON.COM

READ BELACQUA'S BLOG AT :
<http://blogs.salon.com/0004024>



**Breast cancer:
at a store near you!**

POP CULTURE

Seeing Red about Thinking Pink

By Lucinda Marshall

A LONG WITH THE traditional browns and tans of falling leaves and Thanksgiving turkeys, each autumn's colorscape now includes a jarring bubblegum pink. October marked the 24th year of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (NBCAM), which is sponsored by the AstraZeneca Health-Care Foundation along with numerous other organizations, medical associations and government agencies.

Breast cancer is the poster child for cause marketing: There is no other disease we try to eradicate by going shopping. Too often, however, the solution and the problem are commingled.

Who can resist pink M&M's or Oreo cookies with little pink ribbons, for example? Never mind that junk food makes our bodies more vulnerable to disease. Estée Lauder donates money from the sale of its Elizabeth Arden lipstick; unfortunately it contains parabens, a chemical class that has long been linked to breast cancer. BMW will make a donation to the Susan G. Komen Foundation when you test-drive one of their vehicles and Ford Motor Company donates the proceeds from its Warriors in Pink line of clothing to Komen, an organization that supports breast cancer research and community outreach programs such as the Race for the Cure. The vehicles of both companies,

however, continue to spew out carcinogen-laden exhaust. These examples and more are detailed online at www.think-beforeyoupink.org.

This commercialization of breast cancer does not always sit well with those it supposedly benefits. "We don't see little penis trinkets being sold to 'support prostate cancer awareness,' now do we?" asks Jaynse Ashley, 56, a social worker who has undergone three surgeries for breast cancer. "I cannot adequately articulate how disgusting I find the marketing of trinkets, appliances, etc. on the backs of those of us in this battle. There will be a reckoning and I hope I live to see it."

The prevailing consumer model for finding and financing a cure also reinforces the message that individuals are solely responsible for their own health. Much of the information spewed out in October focused on personal risk factors that we can't change, such as genetics and family history. The Web site of the American Cancer Society (ACS), www.cancer.org, devotes its entire explanation about what causes breast cancer to genetic factors, despite the organization's own admission that only 5 to 10 percent of breast cancer is hereditary. Only one paragraph in their discussion of risk factors is given to environmental pollutants, because, according to ACS, "Currently, research does not show a clear link between breast cancer risk and exposure to environmental pollutants such as the pesticide DDE



(chemically related to DDT), and PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls)."

Yet according to Breast Cancer Action (BCA), a nonprofit patient advocacy group, more than 100,000 synthetic chemicals are currently in use in the United States—more than 90 percent of which have never been tested for their impact on people. A new study by the World Wildlife Fund links pollutants to breast cancer through what researcher Andreas Kortenkamp terms the "cocktail effect" of exposure to multiple chemicals that mimic estrogen.

As "State of the Evidence 2006: What is the Connection Between the Environment and Breast Cancer"—a report published jointly by BCA and the Breast Cancer Fund—points out, "many factors that contribute to the disease lie far beyond an individual's personal control and can only be addressed by government policy and private sector changes."

We spent another October racing our little legs off yet again, but instead of a cure we are left with many unanswered questions—not just about breast cancer's

causes, but also how to detect and treat it.

While mortality from breast cancer is falling at a 2.3 percent annual rate in the United States, incidence of the disease continues to increase at a rate of 1 percent. Almost 10 percent of breast cancer deaths worldwide are in the United States, despite the country's aggressive detection protocols. Organizations such as the American Cancer Society and the Komen Foundation advise American women to get annual mammograms starting at the age of 40. In contrast, England, Canada and Australia recommend routine mammograms only every few years after the age of 50, and not at all for younger women unless there is a specific cause for concern.

Recent research by the Nordic Cochrane Centre in Denmark questions the effectiveness of mammography. In a study of 2,000 women, they found that while one woman would have her life prolonged, 10 would undergo unnecessary treatment and 200 would experience unnecessary anxiety because of false positive results.

According to ACS's Director of Breast

Cancer and Gynecological Cancers, Debbie Saslow, ACS's recommendations are based on modeling and inferential studies of the available data such as the speed at which breast cancers are likely to grow. She admits, however, that there is no study that confirms that annual mammograms are more effective than mammograms given every couple of years.

And, what's worse, companies such as General Electric and DuPont, which manufacture mammography equipment, and make generous donations to organizations such as Komen and ACS, also make products that have been linked to cancer. DuPont's Teflon coating—which is used on many products, including non-stick cookware—is made with perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, a chemical linked to cancer by the Environmental Protection Agency. General Electric is a builder of nuclear power plants that produce radiation, a known carcinogen. Both DuPont and GE have been sued for injuries and illnesses caused by the deliberate release of radiation at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation.

[art space]



New Art as Universal Language, at the Arts and Culture Center of Hollywood, Fla., tackles cross-cultural communication with performance, installation and multi-media pieces that explore themes of commitment, romance, morality and identity in an increasingly global society. Pictured is a prop from Venezuelan-born performance artist Nina Dotti's work, "The Wedding Cake ... The Bride As-Is." During the piece, Dotti dresses as the bride, marries random partners in the gallery and serves them slices of wedding cake. Dotti says her performance is a "parody of marriage" that encourages participants to "reflect on their own feelings about marriage, love and family." For more information, visit www.artandculturecenter.org. To learn more about Nina Dotti, visit www.nindotti.com.

The standards for treatment of breast cancer also raise questions. Until recently, virtually all women with breast cancer underwent chemotherapy despite the fact that, according to Associated Press Medical writer Marilyn Marchione, of those who receive chemo, only 15 percent will benefit, 25 percent will get worse and 60 percent didn't need it in the first place. Recent research published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* has also found that the side effects of chemo are much greater than previously known.

AstraZeneca, maker of the estrogen-blocking drug Tamoxifen, is the primary corporate sponsor of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Like other pharmaceutical companies, the company supports the American Cancer Society and the Komen Foundation. The financial interest of such companies clearly lies more in finding a drug "cure" than in addressing the environmental causes of the disease or promoting the benefits of lifestyle choices. Exercise, for example, has in numerous studies been shown to lower hormone levels and thus reduce the chance of getting or dying from breast cancer by as much as 60 percent.

Breast cancer patients deserve a national policy that emphasizes further research into the causes of breast cancer, and bases standards of treatment and diagnosis on the health of patients, not the bottom line of corporations. It is time to move beyond "awareness" to demanding answers. ■

FILM

The Skinny on Thin

By Jessica Clark

AT FIRST, IT'S hard to know who to identify with in *Thin*, filmed over six months at the Renfrew Center, a residential facility devoted to treating eating disorders in southern Florida.

Sallow and bony, the patients cry over cupcakes and denounce each new ounce of flesh as an affront to their rituals of control. Shivering in their backless hospital gowns, they resemble catwalk caricatures. Documentarian Lauren Greenfield captures staff slugging the women behind closed doors—calling one a "bad seed"—and forcing them into corny group sessions in which they must speak while holding an "integrity stick."

But as the film wears on, a more complex picture emerges. The narrative hones in on the treatment paths of four patients: Shelly, 25, so afraid of food that she's been outfitted with a stomach tube; Brittany, 15, who learned her calorie-restricting ways from her anorexic mom; Alisa, 30, a mother of two given to compulsive bingeing and purging; and Polly, 29, a southern firecracker who attempted suicide after eating two slices of pizza. Renfrew's rules and routines come into focus as practical tools for forcing patients to abandon habits of lying and manipulating to mask their obsessions.



Shelly Guillory, 25, a psychiatric nurse, was force-fed through a tube for the last five years.

Jane Fleming, the film's lead consultant, can identify with both sides. One of the first patients at the Florida center, she also served as the executive director of Renfrew Center Foundation. Now the executive director of Young Democrats for America, she helped to develop a program at Renfrew that stresses activism as a tool for recovery. For *Thin*, she served as an advocate for the patients and advised the film crew about how to work with often-reluctant staff.

"Mostly it was honest," Fleming says of the film. "An honest glimpse into how difficult it is to recover, the pain it causes families and loved ones and—maybe the most important—the internal struggle that goes on every minute of the recovery process."

That process can be circuitous and frustrating, with many false starts. Anorexia is the most deadly mental disorder; up to 20 percent of sufferers die from related complications. Some even court it: "I just want to be thin," says Alisa "If it takes dying to get there, so be it."

And while longterm residential treatment is the recommended therapy, only 60 percent of patients recover partially or fully. "There is no magic bullet," says Fleming, adding that on average it takes 8 years for women to fully recover. Indeed, each of the women profiled in *Thin* relapsed after the film.

Recovery is made more difficult by



Contrary to certain attitudes
the world isn't flat.

Savor all the reasons why in *Stereo World* magazine, exploring true stereoscopic 3-D from 19th century stereoviews to IMAX 3-D, digital imaging and stereoscopic artists since 1974.

Recent features include: Making Rose Water in Iran, A 3-D look into North Korea, Morro Bay Estuary stereos, Hitler's navy documented.

Historical articles, cameras, new equipment, reviews, and full stereo pair illustrations plus viewer. Sample copy \$6.00.

www.stereoview.org

PO Box 86708, Portland OR 97286



an insurance system that discriminates against those suffering from eating disorders, refusing to pay for treatment beyond a pre-set limit. In *Thin*, Brittany and Polly both suffer dramatic crises after they are told their coverage is abruptly running out. The solution, says Fleming, is passing the Paul Wellstone Mental Health Parity Act, which would force insurers to cover patients on par with those suffering physical illness. When in power, Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert, had not allowed it to come up to the floor for a vote, "a direct slap in the face for millions of people who struggle not only with eating disorders but depression and other mental illnesses," Fleming says. The bill now has enough votes to pass.

Thin—along with its companion book, exhibit and Web site (www.thindocumentary.com)—makes a powerful argument for parity, but is unable to show the full scope of the treatment. Fleming, however, is a testament to Renfrew's methods. Currently at work on a cookbook for those in recovery, she calls her healing process "one of the most difficult and proudest accomplishments of my life." ■

BOOKS

Cholera and the City

By Aaron Sarver

AT THE MIDPOINT of the 19th Century, many believed that London, a city with almost two and a half million people, was unsustainable. For two decades, cholera epidemics had ravaged London and other major cities in Europe, and prevailing wisdom held that by packing an unprecedented number of people into an area the size of Victorian London the spread of disease was inevitable. And they were right, sort of. In *The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Terrifying Epidemic—and How It Changed Science, Cities, and the Modern World*, Steven Johnson tells the story of London's cholera outbreak of 1854 and how two brilliant men solved the mystery of the deadly disease's spread.

In the mid-19th century, a Londoner's life expectancy was shockingly low: "the average 'gentleman' died at forty-five, while the average tradesman died in his mid-twenties." Even though Victorian

London had grown accustomed to death, the 1848-49 cholera outbreak shocked the population when it killed more than 50,000 of the city's inhabitants. City dwellers lived in constant fear that disease could take their lives with little warning.

Like all urban areas at the time, London lacked the infrastructure of modern cities. By 1854 a citywide sewer system had begun to appear, in part, to help stem the cholera outbreaks. This newly established sewer system co-existed with the old system of dealing with human excrement—the "night soil" men, who hauled the waste that literally filled up the basements of house to farms on the edge of the city. "No extended description of London from that period failed to mention the stench of the city," notes Johnson.

The new rudimentary sewer system simply dumped household sewage into the Thames River, thereby contaminating the underground rivers that were one of the city's main water supplies. Ironically, the man in charge of this was London's sanitation commissioner, Edwin Chadwick. An adherent of the Miasma Theory, which held that cholera was transmitted through a foul stench in the air, Chadwick believed that dumping waste into the

spin cycle

BY JESSICA CLARK AND TRACY VAN SLYKE

The Best of the Ethnic Media

Forget about the Pulitzer Prize. On Nov. 14, the most recent addition to the world of journalism awards ignored old standards like the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, instead honoring the work of such reporters as Dennis Romero of *Tu Ciudad* in Los Angeles and Ray Hanania of *Ynet-News.com/Yedioth Ahronoth* in Orland Park, Ill.

Romero and Hanania are two of the 19 winners from New America Media's (NAM) first National Ethnic Media Awards. NAM is the country's first and largest national network of ethnic news organizations and

runs its own newswire service, funneling content to and from its 700 media partners. According to NAM, there are more than 2,500 ethnic media outlets across the country, from newspapers to TV broadcasts.

The NAM award winners reflected the diversity of these media outlets, honoring reporters who work for print publications like the *Nguoi Viet Daily News* and *Little India* and broadcast outlets like New Tang Dynasty TV.

"Hurricane Katrina and immigration rights dominated news in ethnic media over the last year," says awards coordinator Sandip Roy. "Each of these complex stories reflects ethnic media's

unique role as an advocacy voice, as well as a vital source of news and information for their audiences."

Joining the awards ceremony was Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.). The cynical might suspect that it was more than the great reporting that brought the Senator to the event.

As the Nov. 4 *Washington Post* reported, "While general-market newspapers and broadcast networks are profitable, their well-heeled audience is steadily shrinking. These ethnic media—whose readers, viewers and listeners are often recent immigrants of lower income and limited interest to advertisers—say their current worth may be small but their

potential is immense."

And NAM knows it. The next day, the organization held its first national professional development seminar, including a training session on "The Future of the Ethnic Vote in American Politics."

We're proud that our writers are also looking toward that future: Congratulations to *In These Times* Senior Editor Silja J.A. Talvi, whose story for *ColorsNW*, "The Real Enemy?," received NAM's top reporting award in the category, Movement for Immigrant Rights.

river, away from residences, would prevent further outbreaks of the disease. Of course, by contaminating London's main water supply, he greatly contributed to the spread of cholera. As Johnson points out, a 21st century biological terrorist couldn't have devised a more ingenious plot to endanger the city's population.

However, it wasn't just Chadwick. By 1854, the medical community had no better idea of how to prevent cholera than when it first struck London in 1832. The theory of cholera as an airborne illness persisted, and served to reinforce the prejudices of London's technocrats. According to the dominant theory, those who lived in filth and around foul odors, as the majority of London's working poor did, were more likely to die of the disease. Few people noticed that the "night soil" men, despite their daily dealings with filth, often lived long and healthy lives.

One of those who did was Dr. John Snow. From a humble upbringing, Snow would rise to the pinnacle of 19th century medicine: Queen Victoria summoned the doctor in 1853 to assist in the administration of chloroform during childbirth, a technique Snow himself had perfected. In addition, Snow was an obsessive physician and medical tinkerer with broad-based intellectual pursuits. Doubting the Miasma theory, Snow set out to prove that cholera had been transmitted via the water supply during the 1848-49 outbreak. But concrete proof of his hypotheses proved elusive: public death records were lacking and clarity regarding which households were supplied water by which of the dozens of private companies made Snow's analysis too difficult to complete.

As the summer of 1854 wound down, a cholera outbreak swept through a single neighborhood in London: Soho, Snow's own backyard. "Nearly seven hundred people living within 250 yards of the Broad Street pump had died in a period of less than two weeks," Johnson writes. Snow roamed the neighborhood at a frenzied pace, testing water and interviewing families about their drinking habits.

But Snow would not change the course of history alone. It was Rev. Henry Whitehead, originally a doubter of his theory, that helped him piece together his findings and convince Commissioner Chadwick that the disease was water-borne. As a minister and intellectual man-about-town, Whitehead had more knowledge of the families in Soho than any other resi-

excerpt



The New Entrepreneurs

In their new book, Deconstructing Tyrone: A New Look at Black Masculinity in the Hip-Hop Generation Natalie Hopkinson and Natalie Y. Moore take on the prevailing cultural myths about black men

For men of the Hip-Hop Generation in search of solace, the job is usually the last place to look. Even as the doors have begun to open in corporate America, young black men increasingly seek to return to the kind of sanctuary ... a place to earn their bread while carrying on or creating legacies and institutions in their communities.

The current business landscape has unsettled workers regardless of race, gender, and class. Workers have never really controlled the ship, but at one time they seemed to know the general direction it was going. Across the board, corporate paternalism is dead. On a whim, jobs are downsized or sent overseas. And in our generation, no one expects to spend thirty years at a job anymore. No pensions, no retirement gold watch, no loyalty even from Uncle Sam; quite possibly no Social Security. ... [Growing up]

we heard axioms such as: There is nothing. Harder. In this world. Than being a black man in corporate American. Own your own business. Be a dentist. Write your own ticket. ... Our peers have listened. Young black men ages 25-44 are the group most likely to try to start their own businesses in the country, according to *The Entrepreneur Next Door*, a 2002 Kauffmann Foundation report on nascent business owners. While the start-ups may not always succeed, this group is more likely to give it a try. Approximately twenty-six of every 100 black men with graduate education experience report efforts to start a new business, compared to ten of every 100 white men.



dent. It was Whitehead's connections that allowed Snow to find where the outbreak of cholera originated and Snow couldn't have convinced Chadwick without this crucial information.

Like Snow, the public health officials who perfunctorily investigated outbreaks in the city lacked on-the-ground knowledge of Soho. Together, Snow and Whitehead were able to convince Chadwick to shut down the Broad Street pump before another outbreak could occur.

Snow would pass away a few years later, at 45, before it became widely accepted that cholera was transmitted via water, but he had set in motion a transformation of the sewer system that would ultimately prove him correct. No major cholera outbreaks occurred in London after modernization of the sewer systems was completed in 1866.

Johnson's concluding chapter addresses the problems of today's emerging cities,

which are scarily similar to those of Victorian London. Nairobi and Dhaka have populations approaching 20 million, yet their struggle with lack of clean drinking water and an inadequate public health system go largely unnoticed. The answers to these problems will come in part only with massive investments in these cities' infrastructures, but both the scale and cultural differences of these cities will require new approaches.

Johnson hints that our ability to solve the problems of today's cities might be compromised if we exclude the localized knowledge of figures such as Snow and Whitehead. Indeed, Johnson makes it clear that solving the problems of urban areas requires both a top-down and bottom-up approach. The question he leaves unanswered is whether we are still capable of listening to the ideas of those like Snow and Whitehead in the era of the Department of Homeland Security. ■

BY TERRY J. ALLEN

CT Scans: A Radioactive Risk



MY DENTIST AND I have been bickering for decades. Steve advocates diagnostic X-rays; I argue that ionizing radiation, an established cancer risk, is not worth the benefit of catching a cavity early. Every

couple of years, he threatens to dump me as a patient and I agree to a few X-rays after factoring in the benefits of his skill and his generous hand with the nitrous oxide.

Our negotiations rest on conjoined principles of Western medicine: risk-benefit analysis and informed consent.

But when it comes to the far greater risk of a "procedure performed more than 150,000 times a day in the United States...most consent forms are silent," notes Georgetown University's Adrian Fugh-Berman, in a report for the Hastings Center, an independent bioethics research institute.

Computed tomography (CT) scans take multiple X-ray images from different angles and link them into cross-sections of body tissues and organs. Researchers at Yale found that only a minority of U.S. academic medical centers inform patients about alternatives to diagnostic CT—including sonograms and MRIs—or about the radiation.

One abdominal CT, says the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), exposes a patient to 500 times more radiation than a conventional chest X-ray. Exposure from a single full-body CT scan is within the same range as doses that increased the cancer risk of Japan's A-bomb survivors. Full-body scans can cause a one in 1,250 increased chance of dying from cancer, *Radiology* reports. That risk more than doubles for the 2-3 million children scanned, and leaps again for the third of those kids given at

least three scans, according to the National Academy of Sciences.

Of course, many CT scans are well worth the risk. They can be superb diagnostic tools that result in more effective treatments and, possibly, cures.

But early diagnosis does not always mean longer survival. "If I pick up a tumor that is one centimeter today and you live five years, or I pick it up four years later and you live one year, it's the same thing," Dr. Elliott Fishman, a professor of radiology and oncology at Johns Hopkins Hospital, told the *New York Times*.

The risk-benefit equation skews further at facilities touting CT scan screening for apparently healthy people.

"Are you at risk?," ask the big red letters of a Web pop-up ad. "Find out for only \$99" for a heart scan at Pulse Medical Imaging, "located in the White Plains [NY] business district."

Or "Come to Florida, for a scan and a tan," flashes a Web ad for HealthTest Scan Center, where a pelvic, abdomen and chest scan will set you back \$895, with a heart scan thrown in.

When Tania answered the phone at Boca Raton, Fla., office, I said I wanted information but thought I was healthy. She chuckled, "Everyone thinks that, but it's just to make sure. Prevention is better than a cure." What can a scan prevent? "Death," she replied. And if my doctor refuses to prescribe it? "See our doctor [either Dr. Marc Kaprow or Rohtem Amir]. He'll give you the OK."

I asked Tania about radiation danger. "It's minimal...with this machine," she reassured. How often should I get one? "Talk to the doctor, but some people have them four to five times in a six-month period." Why? "Some people are hypochondriacs," she confided.

Downplaying or ignoring the radiation risks extends to major studies and journals. Researchers at Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical

Center assessed annual CT scans for smokers and former smokers without symptoms and concluded CTs save lives by detecting lung cancer early. The study, published in the October *New England Journal of Medicine*, never mentions radiation risk. The Center would not release its consent form. David Behrman, head of the Institutional Review Board, could not confirm how, or if, it described the radiation risks, but did say, "I can't imagine subjects were not informed."

A *New York Times* article and editorial pointed out design flaws in the study including the lack of a control group, and noted that CT scans carried risks such as false positives, unnecessary biopsies and "needless surgery to remove tumors that might never have become a problem." It, too, omitted radiation concerns.

The number of CT scans in the United States is at 60 million a year and rising. The journal of *American Society of Radiologic Technologists* estimates that "20 percent of radiologic imaging exams are not clinically useful ... [and] lapses in safety protocols also are common, unnecessarily increasing radiation exposures."

Overuse of CT scans "points out a larger problem," says Fugh-Berman. Relying on information from the pharmaceutical and medical device industries, "physicians are more informed about the benefits of therapy than the risks of drugs and procedures; risks related to diagnostics are off the radar screen." And once hospitals and medical practices invest in expensive equipment such as CT scanners, the more they use them the more they make. "They are a very high profit item," says Fugh-Berman.

And profitability is one benefit that commercial medicine always factors in. ■

CONTACT Terry J. Allen at tallen@igc.org

classified

BOOKLETS



BOOKS

LOVELIFE: IRREVERENT, APHORISTIC testament. Gratis from Solus, P.O. Box 111, Porthill, ID 83853

DEFRAUDINGAMERICA.COM SITE FOR COLLEGE education on history of government intrigue from former government insiders. Free book downloads and blog. www.defraudingamericablog.com

DVDS

SIR! NO SIR!; The Ground Truth; Sophie Scholl: The Final Days; Why We Fight & more! www.donnellycolt.com (860) 455-9621

EVENTS

"COLLEGE OF COMPLEXES- Chicago's weekly free speech forum- www.collegeofcomplexes.org."

EVENTS

INDEPENDENT VOTERS OF Illinois- open monthly meetings of the National Affairs Committee, Chicago. www.iviipona.org, cpaidock@hotmail.com or (312) 939-5105.

MERCHANDISE

RAGE AGAINST THE Bush machine. Find cool anti-Bush/progressive t-shirts, stickers, and other sassy gear on one of the largest anti-Bush web sites. Visit us at: www.topplebush.com.



NEWSLETTERS



PERSONALS



WEB SITES

WWW.LIBERALSWITHGUNS.COM

OUTSIDE THE BOX! Secular, spiritual, blogs, books. www.karlroebling.com

COUNT DOWN TO NOVEMBER 7TH! www.sagacious-smartass.com

WEB SITES

DAVID HALBERSTAM IS retarded, McCain cowardly. www.geocities.com/ZYF1092

DONATE \$1.00 TO help playwright produce play. www.tragicdeathofemperortitus.com



"... the most extraordinary theoretical perspective ever lent to the American Constitution."

— Prof. Victor G. Rosenblum,
Northwestern University Law School

The Twenty-First Century Left Cognitions in the Constitution and Why Buckley Is Wrong
(2nd edition)

By William P. Kreml

Save 10% by ordering online
from Carolina Academic Press
www.caplax.com or 1-800-489-7486

Reach more than 30,000 readers by placing a classified ad in the next issue of *In These Times*.

TEXT (PER ISSUE)		DISPLAY (PER ISSUE)	
1-2	95¢ WORD	1-2	\$30 INCH
3-5	85¢ WORD	3-5	\$28 INCH
6-9	80¢ WORD	6-9	\$26 INCH
10-19	75¢ WORD	10-19	\$24 INCH
20+	65¢ WORD	20+	\$22 INCH

Please send a check or money order, your ad text, and this form to Erin Polgreen, Advertising and Marketing Coordinator, *In These Times*, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave, Chicago, IL 60647.

You can also reserve space by calling Erin at (773) 772-0100, x225, or by sending an e-mail to erin@inthesetimes.com

SUPPORT INDEPENDENT MEDIA
DONATE TO *IN THESE TIMES*

Make your tax-deductible donation today!
VISIT: inthesetimes.com/donate

Dread Beats

Continued from back page

Born in 1952 in the small, poor rural town of Chapelton, Jamaica, in the country's pre-independence days, LKJ moved to England with his mother in 1963, along with many other Caribbeans from the Commonwealth seeking a better life. But at every turn, most of those Afro-Caribbeans—as well as their children and grandchildren—found that the Britain of opportunity and equality existed only in their dreams. Ghetto housing, poverty, and police and intra-ethnic violence marred and marked their lives. LKJ wrote about these people, eventually, setting many of his poems to a backdrop of reggae music in a form he called “dub poetry,” a term he coined. (A later generation of political British singers also known as dub poets has included Mutabaruka, Oku Onuora, and Macka B.)

LKJ had a fire for political and race analysis from an early age. At university, he studied sociology; he later joined the Black Panther Movement—a British organization distinct from the American Black Panther Party—and worked with a number of British black radical political and musical collectives. Believing strongly in the DIY ethic and in the right to control one's own means of production, in 1980, he started his own record label, LKJ.

The musical environment that LKJ grew up in was a mix of the Jamaican musical styles of rocksteady, reggae and dub reggae (a version of reggae with heavy echo, unusual sound effects and typically languid pacing), so he gravitated toward that genre. Unlike many of his musical peers, he eschewed—but never disrespected—the spiritual framework of the Rastafarian religion, giving his songs an appeal to audiences uncomfortable with worshipful shout-outs to the deposed Ethiopian Emperor, Haile Selassie.

In the '80s and '90s, LKJ focused on his UK audiences, occasionally touring the United States with sold-out shows packed with a dynamic mix of Rastas, punks and left-wing activists. LKJ's recorded music has been available to U.S. audience on such gems as *Dread Beat An' Blood* (Virgin, 1978), *Forces of Victory* (Mango/Island, 1979), *LKJ in Dub* (Island, 1981) and *Making History* (Island, 1983)—as well as a host of records released through his own label, LKJ Records, including *Tings*

an' Times (1991), *LKJ Presents* (1996), and *More Time* (1998)—and most recently in the form of the Island Records CD collection, *Independent Intavenshan* (1998).

For the first time, LKJ's poetry has been published in the United States, in a brilliant collection entitled *Mi Revalueshanary Fren*. The book was released this year by the New York-based poetry publisher Ausable Press, complete with a companion CD of LKJ reading his own poetry—*sans* musical accompaniment.

Johnson delivers his poetry in a melancholy, matter-of-fact tone and fills it with chilling, revolutionary imagery. All that's required of unfamiliar tongues is the willingness to linger on the poem long enough to understand.

now tell mi someting
mistah police spokesman
tell mi something
how lang yu really tink wi
woulda tek yu batn lick
yu jackboot kick
yu dutty bag a tricks
an yu racist pallyticks
you racist pallyticks?

(From “Mekkin Histri”)

LKJ's dub poetry is written and spoken in a vernacular that has a history that few understand. In his introduction to *Mi Revalueshanary Fren*, Russell Banks notes, “Jamaican creole is a language created out of hard necessity by African slaves from 17th century British English and West African, mostly Ashanti, language groups, with a lexical admixture from the Caribe and Arawak natives of the island. It is a powerfully expressive, flexible and ... musical vernacular, sustained and elaborated upon for over four hundred years by the descendants of those slaves.”

Take this section of “Inglan is a Bitch,” an LKJ ode to the struggles of the Black working class:

well mi dhu day wok an mi dhu
nite wok
mi dhu clean wok and mi dhu
dutty wok
dem seh dat black man is very
lazy
but if yu si how mi wok yu woo-
dah seh mi crazy

LKJ has helped legitimize a language previously dismissed as the “pidgin” Eng-

lish of people too uneducated or lazy (or both) to grasp proper English, introducing it to the world in poetry. In a nod to that accomplishment, in 2002 LKJ's work was included in Penguin Books' Modern Classic series, earning him the distinction of being the first Black poet—and the second living poet—to be included in the anthology.

Still, some have mistaken LKJ's poetic linguistics as that of an uneducated man unable to speak the King's English, something that LKJ pokes fun of in the poem, “If I Woz a Tap-Natch Poet,” which he introduces with a quote from the *Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century Poetry*: “[D]ub poetry has been described as ... ‘overcompensation for deprivation.’”

LKJ goes on:

if I woz a tap-natch poet
like Chris Okigbo
Derek Walcott
ar T.S. Eliot
I woodah write a poem
soh dyam deep
dat it bittah-sweet
like a precious
memari
whe mek yu weep
whe mek yu feel incomplete

The bespectacled, bearded and introverted poet doesn't look the part of a seasoned performer. But once on stage, LKJ springs to life, animating his lines with graceful little dance steps. In lieu of the experience of LKJ live, *Mi Revalueshanary Fren* is a wonderful introduction—or complement, as the case may be—to listening to him drop poetic political science over deep, throbbing bass lines:

for the time is nigh
when passion gather high
when di beat jus lash
when di wall mus smash
an di beat will shif
as di culture altah
when oppression scatah

(from “Bass Culture”)

'Nuff said. Check it. ■

Ausable Press is at www.ausablepress.org.
For more on Linton Kwesi Johnson, visit www.lkjrecords.com.

DREAD BEATS



PHOTOS COURTESY OF AUSABLE PRESS

The dub poetry of Linton Kwesi Johnson

BY SILJA J.A. TALVI

WHEN I FIRST HEARD Linton Kwesi Johnson's words, they came flowing through a nearly blown-out sound system in a Los Angeles punk club in the early '80s.

I could barely hear him, but something about the intensity of his delivery—urgent, streetwise and intellectual—over a pulsing reggae beat made me take notice.

Pressed up against the stage, I turned my small, 15-year-old frame around to watch as a handful of older punks begin to chant the lyrics, mimicking Johnson's thick, Jamaican Creole English:

*it woz in april nineteen eight wan
doun inna di ghetto af Brixtan
dat di babylan dem cauz such a frickshan
dat it bring about a great insohreckshan
an it spread all owevah di naeshan
it woz truly an histarical occayshan*

That song, "Di Great Insohreckshan," tells the story of the Brixton race riots of 1981, when working-class Black and Asian immigrants teamed up with punks living economically and politically marginal lives to fight against the high rates of unemployment and rampant police brutality. Linton Kwesi Johnson's poems describing the riots—and the decades of oppression that led to them—are striking. Johnson (known as LKJ to his fans) has to be spoken to be felt and, for some, just to be understood.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 47